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GROWTH OF A TEACHER GARDEN: A RESEARCH EVALUATION STUDY OF
THE CREATIVE OPTIONS PARTNERSHIP IN EDUCATION (COPE)

by

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Approved by


Committee Chair

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This qualitative single case study examined a school-university partnership program known as the Creative Options Partnership in Education (COPE). The purpose of the study was to understand the emergent qualities of the partnership during its initial five years. Data, collected through individual interviews with partnership leaders, a focus group interview with stakeholder representatives, and program records, were analyzed to identify emerging themes. The qualitative data yielded five themes, which the study described and examined in relation to the PDS Impact Assessment Model and CIPP evaluation model. The identified themes were (a) connections that enhance practice, (b) relationships and bonding, (c) communication, (d) benefits for partner school children, as well as (e) funding and resource issues. Findings indicated that partnership concerns about communication and resources did not prevent meaningful relationships from developing between and among the stakeholders groups, nor did such concerns prevent the identification of benefits to the children at the partner school. The findings suggest that stakeholder beliefs about the quality of their collaborative relationships (input) and their interpretations of how children are benefiting, relate to their assessment of the effectiveness of practices (process) and desired outcomes (product) of the PDS program. Stakeholder judgments regarding the overall impact of the PDS program, particularly the organizational innovations (context) and adaptations in roles and structures (input) brought on during the initial period of PDS development (context), also show connections to these beliefs.

APPROVAL PAGE

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Introduction

For innovative programs to be sustained and institutionalized, they must distinguish themselves as worthy to their stakeholders. Evaluation, both formative and summative, is a necessary and vital part of the growth and development of healthy programs. In recent years, renewed interest has revitalized collaborations between public schools and universities or colleges. Existing in multiple forms and names, these new relationships have only recently begun to speak a common language in terms of both definition and standards for performance. The reawakening of the partnership movement has come, in part, because of the increased scrutiny under which P-12 public schools, and schools and colleges of education operate.

The idea of placing teacher candidates in realistic school situations where they can apprentice with a mentor is not an innovation. The professional development schools (PDSs) and partner schools of today have their roots in the laboratory schools resulting from John Dewey's influence and the early clinical schools of the past. The current school-university partnership movement has grown out the mandates of educational reformers who call for greater collaboration between the nation's schools and the universities and colleges that prepare teachers. The belief that there is a disconnection between traditional teacher preparation and the reality of the classroom fuels this model.

In the middle 1980's, calls for educational reform were outlined in various high profile status reports, by groups such as the National Commission for Excellence in Education, the Task Force for Education and the Economy (*A Nation at Risk, A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*), John Goodlad and the National Network for Educational Renewal (*Teachers for Our Nation's Schools*), and the Holmes Group (*Tomorrow's Teachers*). These reports called for innovations that included "schools that supported novice and experienced teachers' learning in the course of teaching, schools in which teachers grounded their work in a professional knowledge base, and schools in which teachers worked and collectively sought ways to meet students' learning needs" (Levine, 1998b, p. 8). In the early 1990's, such schools began to take shape again under a variety of names, such as professional development schools (PDSs) or partner schools. During the last decade, the number of school-university ventures of this type has grown exponentially. Teitel reported in 1999 that PDSs had, "spread like wildfire" and that almost half of the teacher preparation institutions in the United States had aligned with P-12 schools (p.6). Now in the early part of the 21st Century, there is intense interest in evaluating the effectiveness of these collaborative partnerships to find out if they are merely fads with little to no lasting influence, like the critics of many other innovative programs in education believe.

Cassandra Book (1996), Lee Teitel (1998, 2001, 2003), and Linda Valli, David Cooper, and Lisa Franks (1997) have published literature reviews summarizing the research on PDSs and other types of school-university partnerships. They agreed that a trilogy of reports on education reform by the Holmes Group, *Tomorrow's Teachers*

(1986), *Tomorrow's Schools of Education* (1995), and particularly *Tomorrow's Schools* (1990), was pivotal in shaping of the current phenomenon known as a PDS. The Holmes Group was composed of thirty-six institutions of higher learning that allied, and began discussions on how to improve the state of education and the preparation of teachers. The group was named for Henry Holmes, dean of the Graduate School of Education at Harvard from 1920 through 1940.

The group's early discussion focused on what appeared to be a major new departure in teacher education, the addition of a fifth year of study with the option of a master's degree to be added to the earlier earned baccalaureate (Scrupski, 1999). Other significant networks emerged around the same time, particularly Goodlad's National Network for Educational Renewal (1993) which established a network of partner schools, and the American Federation of Teacher's Professional Practice Schools (Levine, 1992). Much formal research has been completed and some studies have reached publication during the past decade as the renewed concept of school-university partnerships gradually has become better defined and institutionalized. However, the necessity of evaluation for survival of this renewal effort is ever present. As Teitel (2001) states, "Credible, systematic documentation of the impacts of professional development schools (PDSs) is critical to the growth and sustenance of the partnerships themselves and of the PDS movement" (p.1).

Literature about the evaluation of school-university partnerships programs has been slower to reach publication than studies that are descriptive of activities, roles, and partnership development processes. In his extensive review of literature, Teitel (1998)

found that the most common type of literature on school-university collaboration was descriptive in nature, with the second most common type as case study. Evaluation reports were the third most common type mentioned. The literature reveals a wide range of quality and focus, with most reports focusing on teacher preparation and professional development (Teitel, 1998).

In 1998 in a small city in the Piedmont region of North Carolina, a formal partnership between the teacher education department of a small liberal arts college and a local elementary school was established and named COPE (Creative Options Partnership in Education). COPE is a program connecting elementary education majors and department of education faculty at the college with experienced classroom mentor teachers and students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade at the partner elementary school. In general, the program is designed to provide academic support to the children at the elementary school, ongoing clinical experience for teacher candidates majoring in elementary education, and opportunities for professional development for faculty and administration from both institutions. The program has operated under six initial goals adopted by the original investigative committee in 1998 (Appendix A).

Formative assessments, through stakeholder surveys and focus groups transcripts, have been an annual occurrence since the program's genesis. Each summer, COPE program leaders have reviewed the results for the previous year and used them to inform program changes for the upcoming year. During the fifth year of operation, these partnership program leaders expressed an interest in participating in a summative program evaluation to provide insights into how the program had addressed the six goals

in the initial design. During 2003-04, I conducted a summative evaluation of the first five years of the COPE program, using both new and archived data. Archived data included information collected annually over a five-year period. New data came from recent interviews conducted with program leaders and other stakeholders.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide a summative analysis of the school-university partnership known as the Creative Options Partnership in Education (COPE). Program evaluation is a critical element in determining the willingness of stakeholders to implement the changes necessary for institutionalization to take place. Merely believing that a program is meeting its intended purposes is not enough. The longevity of a program is often tied to its ability to secure financial and institutional support, and more often than not, that support is linked to the presentation of clear evidence of desired outcomes.

Five years have passed since the genesis of the COPE partnership. While initial impressions of the program and preliminary data have been encouraging, the partnership leaders desired an evaluation of the partnership program. Annual formative evaluation data have been collected, reviewed, shared, and archived since 1998, and a preliminary progress report was written in the fall of 2002. However, no summative evaluation had been completed.

The intended outcome of this evaluation was to understand how the COPE partnership program was supporting the initial goals the partners had established five

years ago. The findings inform decision making about the design, resources, and objectives of the partnership.

Conceptual Framework

Drawing on ideas found in research literature about school restructuring, Lee Teitel (2001) introduced a conceptual framework for assessing PDSs that includes questions of definition, credible outcomes, and a balance between process and product. This framework, called the PDS Impact Assessment Model, provides a clear picture of the connectivity between the structures of school-university partnerships and the outcomes that are desired from them. This conceptual model incorporates an assessment of impacts by analyzing the approaches to “teaching, learning and leadership” of partnership stakeholders (Teitel, 2001, p.4). Using a linear format, the PDS Impact Assessment Model follows the path of the stakeholders through the organizational innovations brought on by establishing the PDS to the resulting adaptations, practices, and outcomes (Teitel, 2001). The key stakeholders (school, PDS, and the Teacher Education Program) are assessed in the areas of “improved student learning; improved preparation of preservice teachers, administrators and other educators; and improved, continuing professional development and learning for all school-and university-based adults who work in the partnership” (Teitel, 2001, p. 3). This contemporary framework for PDS assessment supports the proposed evaluation study, in terms of the stakeholders, program processes, and outcomes to be assessed.

A more established framework for evaluating educational programs that focuses on process and product is the CIPP model, developed by Daniel L. Stufflebeam. This

model, first established in the 1970's, is a broad four-part view of the change process that examines the stages of an innovation from initial planning (i.e. context evaluation) to outcomes (i.e., product evaluation). Stufflebeam (1970) defines evaluation as "the process of delineating, obtaining, and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives" (p. 129). The letters of the acronym represent four different types of evaluation: context, input, process, and product, with the parts generally corresponding to these questions: What needs to be done? How should it be done? Is it being done? Did it succeed? (Stufflebeam, 2002). These four types of evaluation provide a framework for program analysis and inform the decisions of program administrators and stakeholders.

Context evaluation defines the institutional context of the program, identifies stakeholders and needs, diagnoses problems related to needs, and judges whether objectives are responsive to needs. Input evaluation assesses the program's capacities based on the resources that are available and the procedures and structures that are in place. Process evaluation examines the program's design and the implementation of its parts and identifies or predicts program defects for the purpose of informing decisions, recording and judging program activities. Product evaluation provides descriptions and judgments of outcomes, and relates them to the program objectives and to the context, input, and process information (Stufflebeam, 1970, 2000; Stufflebeam & Shrinkfield, 1985). The CIPP model, like Teitel's PDS Impact framework, stresses evaluation for the purpose of improving and strengthening programs, a point also stressed by researchers in the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) PDS Standards Project (Levine, 1998a).

The framework of evaluation study, outlined in Figure 1, is a blend of the established CIPP model and the PDS Impact Assessment Model. For this study, the two models provide an evaluation framework with specificity to PDS as well as general clarity.

Figure 1 Alignment of Models for	Stufflebeam's CIPP Evaluation Model	Teitel's PDS Impact Assessment Model
P R O G R A M E V A L U A T I O N	CONTEXT Assessment (What is being done and what needs to be done?)	<i>Assessment of Organizational Innovation; Partnership Development:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organizational changes and development for:• The School• The Partnership Program (PDS)• The Teacher Education Program
	INPUT Assessment (How is it done and how should it be done?)	<i>Assessment of Adaptations in Roles, Structures, and Culture:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes in governance; decision making; leadership• Use of time, roles, and rewards;• Views of collaborative relationships, expectations
	PROCESS Assessment (Is it being done?)	<i>Assessment of Best Practice in Teaching Learning and Leadership:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classroom approaches• Different expectations for teacher professional development• Different approaches to preservice field work
	PRODUCT Assessment (Did it succeed?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Assessment of Desired Outcomes In Improved Learning For:</i>• All students• Experienced teachers and other education personnel• Preservice teacher and other teacher education personnel

Research Questions

The following questions that incorporate the six program goals (Appendix A) guided the evaluation study:

- (1) In what ways, if any, has the partnership program implemented changes intended to improve the quality of teacher preparation?(Goals 1,5)
- (2) In what ways, if any, has the partnership program implemented changes intended to influence the professional roles of the educators involved?
(Goals 2, 4)
- (3) In what ways, if any, has the partnership program implemented changes to assist educators in identifying connections between classroom practice and educational theory? (Goal 3)
- (4) In what ways, if any, has the partnership implemented changes intended to produce measurable improvements in classroom learning? (Goal 6)
- (5) In what ways, if any, has the partnership implemented changes intended to facilitate the practice of inquiry? (Goals 2, 3)
- (6) What have been the results of these implemented changes?

Definition of Terms

teacher preparation: a process whereby prospective teachers acquire and demonstrate content, pedagogical, and practical knowledge for the purpose of equipping them to maximize learning for their students (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996).

professional roles: functions of the teaching position that involve learning, instructing, supervising, and collaborating with students, peer faculty, and college partners (Darling-Hammond as cited in Richardson & Placier, 2001).

classroom practice: what students and teachers do in the classroom that influences learning outcomes (Dunkin and Biddle as cited in Floden, 2001).

educational theory: statement of principles that attempt to examine, explain, and interpret the phenomenon of teaching and learning (Woolfolk, 2003; Shulman as cited in Leinhardt, 2001).

classroom learning: demonstration by learners of acquired content and skills through product oriented events (Levine, 1996).

practice of inquiry: the process of identifying and investigating questions as a mechanism for understanding and assessing the teaching-learning process (Schaefer as cited in Teitel, 2003; NCATE, 2001a).

school-university partnership: a collaborative relationship between one or more PreK-12 schools or school districts and one or more college or university professional education programs (Teitel, 2003).

Professional Development School (PDS): an innovative institution formed through a partnership designed to provide simultaneous renewal for both P-12 schools and professional education programs by collaborative participation in activities that incorporate four criteria: professional preparation of candidates, faculty development, inquiry directed at the improvement of practice, and enhanced student learning (Teitel, 2003).

stakeholders: organizations made up of the people who carry out the primary work of the partnership (the school, the PDS, the Teacher Education Program) (Clark, 1999).

partnership leaders: educators in leadership positions with decision-making powers that impact partnership functions (Clark, 1999).

partnership liaison: an educator who plans and coordinates partnership activities (may be based at either the school or college site) (Teitel, 2003).

Limitations

The focus of this evaluation study is a single program. Four representatives of the public school stakeholders, three representatives of the teacher candidate stakeholders, and two representatives of the college stakeholders participated in the interviews and

focus group. Although the analysis of archived summaries provides information from previous stakeholder groups, the small sample size limits the generalizability of the study to a larger population. Additionally, information reported by a stakeholder is based on his/her perceptions and may be inaccurate or exaggerated based on the stakeholder's purposes.

Because program evaluations involve judgments of performance or worth, they are more subjective than studies with a greater empirical focus. Moreover, program evaluations are temporally laborious, which may result in a lengthy report of findings.

Significance of the Study

This evaluation study of the first five years of a school-university partnership is important for several reasons. First, there exists an atmosphere of intense public scrutiny around renewal and reform efforts in education. There is an increasing level of impatience for school-university partnerships to validate their claims of positive outcomes, and criticism appears in the literature with references to the scarcity of research, especially evaluative data and longitudinal research (Reed, Kochan, Ross, & Kunkel, 2001; Snyder, 1999; Teitel, 1999, 2001; Hallanan & Khmelkov, 2001).

Second, this study extends the audience beyond that of the program's participants, for whom the formative evaluations provided information annually for the purpose of program revision and development. Both formative and summative evaluations are essential to informing the decisions made during both the developmental period of a program and later during determination of the program's future. This wider audience includes the program participants, and also potential participants, funding sources, and

institutional officials. The inclusion of this larger audience better informs those who make decisions about program institutionalization, continuation, termination, and expansion (Worthen, Sanders, Fitzpatrick, 1997).

Organization of the Remaining Chapters

The remainder of this evaluation study is organized into four chapters. Chapter two synthesizes literature on the origins and reawakening of the partnership movement connecting P-12 schools and teacher preparation programs at universities or colleges. Chapter three explains the components of the Creative Options Partnership in Education program and details the design of the procedures for collecting and analyzing the data. Chapter four provides findings from the data analyses, presentation of the emergent themes, and the correlation of those themes to the evaluation model. Chapter five responds to the research questions and discusses the conclusions of the study, implications for PDS partnerships, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This review of literature describes the current school-university partnership movement, with particular attention to the development and adoption of definitions, standards, and assessment models for partnership programs. Apprenticeships in teacher preparation have a substantial history, from the time of Dewey's laboratory schools to the professional development schools (PDSs) and partner schools of the last twenty years. The cyclical nature of school-university partnership movements often parallels the mandates of educational reform movements. These reforms, in part, reflect a belief that there is a misalignment between traditional teacher preparation and the realities of the classroom.

Renewed Interest in Partnerships

During the 1980's, educational reformers called for changes in teacher preparation. Outlined in various high profile status reports (e.g., *A Nation at Risk*, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*; *Teachers for Our Nation's Schools*, *Tomorrow's Teachers*), these mandates attracted significant public attention. The reports called for innovations that included "schools that supported novice and experienced teachers' learning in the course of teaching, schools in which teachers grounded their work in a

professional knowledge base, and schools in which teachers worked and collectively sought ways to meet students' learning needs" (Levine, 1998b, p. 8).

The result was the concept of a school-university relationship taking shape again under a variety of names, such as professional development schools (PDSs) or partner schools. Interest in establishing these partnerships continue, but now many have matured to the stage that there is interest in evaluation. Policymakers and stakeholders want to see the level of effectiveness of these collaborative partnerships to find out if they will last and if they will have a significant effect on student learning.

As many teacher education programs within institutions of higher education aligned themselves with P-12 schools, they often became part of larger networks. These various groups (e.g., Holmes Group, NNER, and CES) set up governance structures with unique definitions, roles, goals, and principles. Research and questions about these new school-university partnerships began to appear in the literature.

The Question of Definition

As the number of school-university partnerships grew exponentially, it became clear that not everyone defined the concept of school-university partnership in the same way. John P. Dolly, E. Aiko Oda (1997) and Phyllis Metcalf-Turner (1999), in their discussions of the search for a common definition, indicate that the early reports (Goodlad, 1990; Holmes Group, 1990) defined PDSs with a focus more on the collegial relationships between the partners. However, as discussions continued, the literature reveals that the boundaries of the earlier definition seemed to extend beyond this limited focus with various organizations each proposing a variation. The definition adopted by

the Holmes Group, emulated by many research institutions, served as a one of the first models and introduced the term “professional development school” or “PDS” in 1986. Around this same time, the Carnegie report, *A Nation Prepared: Teacher for the 21st Century* (1986), proposed “clinical schools” and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) began “professional practice school” pilots. A vast array of partnership definitions and titles soon followed (e.g., partner school, professional development center, centers for teaching and learning, professional development academies, induction schools, teacher schools, and centers for professional development and technology), creating a language within the partnership reform movement that is quite complex (Abdal-Haqq, 1998). In recent years, professional development school (PDS) has emerged as a recognized name and is most frequently cited in the literature.

Teitel (1998a), in analyzing the various interpretations of the partnering concept, recounts how common ideas began to converge from the goals and purposes of the various organizations within the partnership arena. Comparisons reveal that school-university partnership work has common purposes and much of it centers on four major ideas: improvement in student achievement, teacher preparation, enhanced professional development, and improving practice through research and inquiry. Jon Snyder (1999), when reflecting on the development of the partnership movement, writes that the field had “reached an unusual consensus as well as an unusual discord on what a PDS is”, noting that the consensus was at the definitional level and the discord was operational (p. 136). Once common attributes and similar goals were identified, the conversation turned toward the issue of standards.

The Evolution of Standards

Throughout the 1990's, seeds for new school-university partnerships were planted, and roots, stems, and leaves of older partnerships matured. Many educators within the movement wrote and spoke about the lack of standards, and of their concern for the sustainability and credibility of the partnership movement (Winitzky & Stoddard, 1992; Darling-Hammond, 1994; Snyder, 1999; Teitel, 2001). In the literature, educators involved in school-university partnership work began sharing the issues that impeded and threatened them, as well as sharing details about their programming successes or failures (Button, Ponticell, & Johnston, 1996; Goodlad, 1996; Kirschner, Dickinson, & Blosser, 1996; Metcalf-Turner & Fichetti, 1996; Richmond, 1996; Sandholtz & Finan, 1998, Teitel, 1998b).

Abdal-Haqq (1998) notes that from 1991 through 1996 the number of research and evaluative reports found in the literature more than doubled. Throughout the 1990's, case studies, largely focused on PDS networks, appeared in numerous book publications (Slater, 1996; Hoffman, Reed, & Rosenbluth, 1997; Johnston, 1997; Trubowitz & Longo, 1997; Johnston, Brosnan, Cramer, & Dove, 2000). Moreover, much information about PDS work appeared and continues to appear informally in fugitive literature (e.g., internal documents, proposals, project reports to funding sources, newsletters, and promotional materials), audiovisual material, and electronic sources. Such informal sources often provide valuable information on partnership work that does not appear in more traditional sources (Book, 1996; Teitel, 1998a; Valli, Cooper, & Frankes, 1997; Abdal-Haqq, 1998).

Much activity was taking place in PDS settings, but the problem remained how to assess the quality of these complex school-university partnerships in terms of program processes, activities, and outcomes. There were no clear standards, although there were a variety of goals, principles, vision statements, and beliefs. However, in 2001, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) PDS Standards Project published an established set of standards, elements, and developmental guidelines for professional development schools. This project developed and field-tested draft standards in eighteen diverse PDS partner sites over a period of three years (Levine, 1998a).

NCATE (2001b) defines professional development schools as “innovative institutions formed through partnerships between professional education programs and P-12 schools” (p. 2). This broad definition becomes more distinct through the requirement of a shared mission and of particular characteristics or elements. The mission of professional development schools as defined by NCATE includes professional preparation of candidates, faculty development, inquiry directed at improvement of practice, and enhanced student learning. Further, this definition is delineated through distinct elements presented in the form of five PDS standards: learning community, accountability and quality assurance, collaboration, diversity and equity, and structures, resources and roles (NCATE, 2001b).

It is unclear at this time if NCATE’s definition will become the one used by most school-university partnerships, but it is likely to have much influence, especially in those states where state approval for teacher education programs to recommend candidates for

licensure is linked to NCATE accreditation. Lucas (1997) concludes, “the reality is that national norms and accreditation standards, those of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), in particular, exercise a powerful determinative force on upward of half the nation’s preparatory programs for teachers and perhaps a suasive influence on as many more” (p.182).

To assist school-university partnerships and sponsoring agencies with their own assessment studies, NCATE published a handbook describing the process. This manual was developed with the input of the PDS participants during the field-testing of the NCATE PDS standards. It recommends a two-part process of assessing PDS programs. The first part involves a partnership self –study, and the second part, a site visit. The handbook describes five areas of connection between the NCATE PDS Standards and the assessment processes that go with them. Both share a developmental nature, a focus on PDS work, accountability and quality assurance, collaboration, as well as joint inquiry to integrate professional and student learning (NCATE, 2001a). In 2003, Lee Teitel, a leading researcher, author, and advocate of partnership programs also published a comprehensive handbook for developing, maintaining, and assessing partnership programs. This handbook incorporates the NCATE standards for professional development schools into the developmental process, and provides a conceptual framework for impact assessment.

Evaluation and Impact Studies

In 1998, Abdal-Haqq lamented the “paucity of evaluation studies that document outcomes”, but she also indicated “we are beginning to see some movement in this

direction” (p. 9). The earliest research on professional development schools focused on preservice and practicing teacher outcomes through self-reported changes in beliefs, self-efficacy, and satisfaction as reported in attitude surveys, interviews, reflective journal entries, personal narratives, and anecdotes (Book, 1996; Abdal-Haqq, 1998). Due to the short period of time many PDSs had been in operation, many of these studies were not longitudinal.

These early studies indicated that a number of teachers benefited from their involvement in PDS programs by an increased willingness to take risks and try new and varied approaches (Zeichner, 1992; Miller & O’Shea, 1994; Crow, Stokes, Kauchak, Hobbs, & Bullough, 1996). Compared to preservice teachers from traditional programs, PDS preservice teachers entered teaching with expanded knowledge of the rhythms of school life, such as routines and school activities (Trachtman, 1996), felt more confident, and felt better prepared to teach in diverse settings (Tusin, 1995; Book, 1996; Arends & Winitzky, 1996). They had lower attrition rates and were more reflective than their non-PDS peers (Hayes & Wetherill, 1996). However, they experienced higher levels of stress than their peers (Hopkins, Hoffman, & Moss, 1997) and like their peers felt that theory was of limited value when compared to the practical experience gained in student teaching (Abdal-Haqq, 1998).

Practicing teachers felt energized (Trachtman, 1996), less isolated, less powerless, and more professional (Morris & Nunnery, 1993; Ariav & Clinard, 1996). They also experienced increased opportunities for research and collegial activity (Trachtman, 1996).

Principal perceptions were positive as reported in the research of Hayes and Wetherill (1996) who reported the results of a PDS partnership evaluation between UNC Wilmington and two school districts. In part of this study, principals who had hired program graduates were interviewed by telephone and asked to compare the PDS graduates to others at the same level in six areas. Eighty percent of the principals surveyed felt the graduates who participated in PDSs exceeded their non-PDS peers in their preparation in areas of classroom management, their knowledge and use of varied classroom strategies, and their ability to plan instruction. The principals indicated that the PDS graduates made a smoother transition into their first year of teaching, were positive role models for trying innovative techniques, and were unique in their increased ability to self-analyze, to problem solve, and to more readily utilize available resources.

Sustainability studies appeared in the literature at the end of the 1990's as drafts of the PDS standards were published by NCATE. One such study, published in 1999 by the University of South Florida, examined the sustainability of three PDS partnerships by examining the developmental transitions identified by the standards. The researchers selected three of the seven PDSs that had been operating the longest and conducted focus groups at each of the three schools with representative stakeholders (i.e., school administrators, K-8 students, clinical teachers, non-clinical teachers, support staff, parents, interns, university faculty, and the university department chairperson). The results indicated that the draft standards provided "an excellent yardstick for documenting the evolution of PDSs at the University of South Florida, and a useful tool for identifying areas of the PDS mission needing further development" (Rosselli,

Brindley, Hall, Homan, & Applegate, 1999, p. 8). Furthermore, these researchers used the data analysis in an evaluative manner to identify areas of weakness in their application of the PDS model, namely the areas of quality assurance, accountability, organization, roles, and structures.

Although the early PDS studies of the 1990's produced some evidence demonstrating the benefits of PDS models to teachers, both preservice and practicing, there were persisting questions. There was little evidence to support the idea that PDSs were influencing student achievement, which for many is the most critical function of PDS work. Additionally, the data collected on PDS preservice teachers was largely limited to the period of time they were working in the PDS. There were few follow-up studies that tracked preservice teachers after they entered the profession and the views of all stakeholder groups were not present in the literature, such as the views of P-12 students and parents (Abdal-Haqq, 1998).

Today, research on the impacts of PDS is present and growing, with a number of significant longitudinal studies around the country. In his profile of a number of selected PDS impact research efforts, Teitel (2000) describes several studies either recently completed or currently in process across the United States. He is currently revising this publication to include updates on the studies in process and to address new studies conducted in the last four years.

One of the most comprehensive studies to date on the impact of professional development schools involves The Benedum Collaborative, a model of teacher education, which includes a partnership between the University of West Virginia's College of

Human Resources and Education and twenty-one public schools within five nearby counties. Following a study by the college in 1998, the Benedum Center for Education Reform, with the sponsorship of the Benedum Foundation of Pittsburgh, requested a study of the program by the RAND Education Corporation. A preliminary report of the study by RAND was published in 2000, and results of a longitudinal study are forthcoming.

The preliminary findings reported in 2000 indicated that the Benedum program attracted more highly qualified novice teachers into the program and that they earned better grades and were highly regarded by PDS staff. The report found that students in the PDS schools received higher test scores and larger annual math gains than non-PDS students. However, the report indicated that there was no definitive evidence that the school becoming a PDS caused the increase in scores. The study found that Benedum has achieved some success in creating “empowered communities”, but less success in creating “centers of inquiry”. The research indicated wide variations in the level of participation within the program, and the report outlined some specific concerns for the future, most notably the need for structured faculty incentives, institutionalized funding, placement space for novices, employment options, and various measures of success (Gill & Hove, 2000).

Preliminary results from another significant ongoing study were published in 1997, and describe three professional development schools and their relationship to Texas A & M University. These results, which are part of a larger study, reflect data collected and analyzed from seven school sites participating in the Teacher Education Initiative

(TEI) project supported by the National Education Association. The focus of this study was the impacts of TEI partnerships from the perspectives of multiple stakeholders. Data collection began in 1995 with standardized surveys, interview and case study protocols, and archival data sources to facilitate cross-site comparison (Loving, Wiseman, Cooner, Sterbin, & Seidel, 1997; Teitel, 2000).

Results of this study indicated that all stakeholders shared a common vision about the partnership and these goals were aligned with the principles of the Teacher Education Initiative. The evaluation concluded that most of the goals of the program were being implemented successfully. Mentor teachers, preservice teachers, and university faculty all believed the program positively influences their own professional development and the academic development of the students. However, the study indicated that more research was needed to determine the actual benefits to students.

The earliest of evaluation studies that included PDS influence on student learning involved small projects with limited numbers of students. In the context of the Texas A & M partnerships, Wiseman and Crooner (1996) shared the results of a project that matched language arts methods preservice teachers with children as “writing buddies” at several PDS sites. Results indicated that writing scores on the state achievement test increased from a 69% school pass rate to 82% after the first year to 92% after the second year (Abdal-Haqq, 1998)

The data in the Texas A & M study revealed that practicing teachers and preservice teachers who worked together in a PDS setting experienced new leadership roles, and they felt the benefits of the program outweighed the increased time and work.

University faculty members indicated that they were forming new relationships within the PDS setting that these new relationships provided insights into their own teaching. The data from all stakeholders indicated that they viewed teaching and learning effectively as a priority (Loving et al., 1997).

All stakeholders reported the perception that increased time in the classroom for preservice teachers was a valuable realistic experience and increased confidence. The stakeholders believed that by submersion in the culture of the school, preservice teachers learned the realities of knowing, working, and assessing children, as well as learned to question and to reflect on their teaching.

Yet, the partnership was perceived as fragile, due to concerns about future funding, commitment, and staffing. An ongoing concern was communication and stakeholders pointed to the ability of an effective liaison to work in both educational arenas as critical to the process of keeping all informed. Evaluation and dissemination of results was seen as a critical, but often overlooked, piece to the partnership (Loving et al., 1997).

An additional evaluation study involved the Colorado Partnership for Educational Renewal (CoPER), a member of the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER). This study, involving six universities and 12 school districts, reported on CoPER's progress by creating "portraits" or snapshots of individual school sites at particular points in time, comparing eight different partner schools over the period of a three-year cycle. Evaluators analyzed multiple data sources, including logs of partnership activities, written surveys from stakeholders, and focus group interviews. The presentation of

results nestled around the four functions of partner schools adopted by the NNER: exemplary education for all students, teacher preparation, continued professional development, and inquiry (Kozleski, 1999).

Findings indicated that communication and sustained university presence at the partner sites were valued as these contribute to feelings of community between the partner schools and the university. As with the Texas A & M study mentioned earlier (Loving et. al, 1997), the stakeholders in CoPER perceived the work as beneficial, despite the demands of time and energy spent on sustaining the relationships. A majority of stakeholders reported that the relationship injected new ideas and instructional strategies into the classroom (Kosleski, 1999).

Valued experiences differed by stakeholder. For example, preservice teachers in particular noted the importance of the authentic setting, and provided a variety of responses in terms of the connections they saw between the theory they learned at the university and the practice they witnessed at the partner school. School faculty members mentioned the continuity of the school-based experience, and university faculty members mentioned the added quality the preservice teachers brought to the learning experience in the schools.

Support, trust, and the development of professional relationships, emerged from the data as shared values among preservice and school faculty. Reaction from students was positive regarding the presence of preservice teachers in their classroom, and older students in PDS schools viewed the school in a support role for preservice teachers. Results revealed that stakeholders desired more time to plan, understand, reflect, and

support classroom activities together. Moreover, school faculty and preservice teachers believed that early integration of preservice teachers into the cycle of the school year would be an improvement (Kosleski, 1999).

As with the previously described studies (Loving et al., 1997; Gill & Hove, 2000), professional development activities were viewed positively, with stakeholders mentioning increased dialogue about learning and teaching. Partner school faculty members perceived preservice teachers as sources for ideas, resources and as catalysts for improving their practice and for staying current in their professional understandings. Survey data indicated a difference in the perception of increased learning, more for school and preservice teachers than for university faculty. The focus group data suggested that the Arts and Sciences University faculty involvement was minimal but emerging (Kosleski, 1999).

Inquiry was less visible and difficult to measure. When given the choices of reflective practice, action research, Socratic seminars, informal evaluation, and formal evaluation, the preservice teachers reported greatest involvement in reflective practice and action research. The school faculty members reported involvement primarily in reflective practice, informal evaluation, and Socratic seminars. Secondary school faculty reported higher levels of participation in formal research than elementary faculty. University faculty reported involvement in action and formal research and much less in reflective practice, informal evaluation, and Socratic seminars (Kosleski, 1999).

Overall, reflective practice was the most common form of inquiry and many respondents felt the practice was increasing. Time constraints were perceived as barriers

to inquiry, and school faculty did not see inquiry as their role and responsibility as much as they saw it as the role for university faculty (Kosleski, 1999).

In 1995, the Houston Consortium for Professional Development and Technology Centers conducted a program evaluation of its partnership network of four universities, three school districts, and two intermediate school agencies (Houston, Hollis, Clay, Ligons, & Roff, 1999). This evaluation was part of a larger statewide study initiated in 1996 to evaluate the Centers for Professional Development of Teachers (CPDT). These sites include programs that are based in a number of programmatic areas, including professional development schools. The 21 centers include 35 universities, 15 educational service centers, and 113 school districts (Teitel, 2000; CPDT Evaluation Summary, 1997).

The evaluation of the Houston Consortium (1997) indicated that 43% of PDS faculty perceived that they taught differently, since beginning their participation in the program. Observations of preservice teachers found that they taught differently and had higher achievement scores on state certification tests than a comparison group. Achievement on state-mandated tests increased for students after their schools became PDSs. In fact, preliminary results (Houston et al., 1995) showed that students' mathematics scores increased at all 16 of the sites studied, and at 14 of 16 sites, reading scores increased within just two years of the schools becoming professional development schools. The report did not claim a causal relationship between a school's PDS status and increases in student achievement, but the report suggested that certain attributes of PDS

activity, such as one-on-one and small group tutoring, may have contributed to improvements in student outcomes (Abdal-Haqq, 1998).

Results of the larger CPDT study indicated positive impressions about teachers prepared in PDS schools. All principals interviewed reported that teachers prepared through PDSs entered the school environment more successfully. Ninety percent of the principals interviewed said PDS prepared teachers were more confident, provided better instruction, and compared favorably to more experienced teachers. Seventy-nine percent of principals said PDS prepared teachers had better classroom management than typical first year teachers. School faculty in PDSs reported increased participation in teacher education practices, such as providing input into university course instruction and evaluation of preservice teachers. They reported more collaboration between themselves and university faculty, and noted increased confidence, as well as instructional and professional expertise in preservice teachers. The evaluation reported a significant transition from university campus based course work to field based work in the schools as well as increased collaborative planning, policy making, and participation by school faculty in technology training, advanced coursework, and professional conferences (CPDT Evaluation Summary, 1997).

A program evaluation in 1999 by researchers at the University of Tennessee Chattanooga measured differences in the perceptions of various stakeholders in the PDS process using survey instruments. They found through their analyses of the data that the experience was successful because of several major factors. First, stakeholders perceived the relationship between the university and the local school system established by the

onsite coordinators to be a major reason for the partnership's success. Second, stakeholders believed flexibility given to the university to make changes within the program and the enthusiasm of the university faculty involved at each site contributed positively to the program. Third, the attention given to selecting PDS sites that had a philosophy and faculty that supported the PDS concept was reported by stakeholders as a factor supportive of the partnership's success (Gettys, Ray, Rutledge, Puckett, & Stepanske, 1999).

In a recent program evaluation report, preservice researchers at Centenary College of Louisiana constructed surveys and designed interview protocols to evaluate the school-college partnership program (Coyle et al, 2002). They gathered data from a variety of PDS stakeholders (preservice and practicing teachers, administrators, graduates who had experiences in the professional development school, and professors of methods courses taught on-site). They reported that most practicing teachers involved in PDS work felt the school and college administration supported the PDS partnership. These teachers felt strongly that teacher candidates were better prepared than previous candidates had been before the implementation of the partnership. However, stakeholder views varied when asked about parent involvement. Teachers involved in PDS work believed that parent involvement had not increased while other respondents believed there had been an increase. Program graduates said they would recommend the program to others, and current undergraduates believed that the methods classes held on-site at the PDS had prepared them to meet diverse student needs. Funding and personnel changes were greatest challenges perceived by the college professors working with the PDS. No

particular evaluation model was mentioned in the evaluative report, although the NCATE PDS standards were noted as a “source of data” (Coyle et al., 2002, p.2).

The design of a comprehensive assessment system developed by San Diego State University within a school-university collaborative appeared in the literature in 2002. Although the purpose of the assessment system appeared to be primarily the assessment of the teacher preparation program, the design included components of evaluation for PDS. Sources of evidence included evaluations of PDS teachers, coordinators, PDS perception surveys, state report cards for the PDS sites, and an Impacting Student Learning (ISL) component in which teacher candidates gather evidence of P-12 student learning and achievement during their PDS work (Gendernalik-Cooper, 2002). Baseline data are reported in this publication, but no evaluative results as of yet are available.

The preliminary report of an ongoing study in Kentucky describes an evaluation model designed collaboratively by the PDS partners (Petrosko & Munoz, 2002). The model cites two evaluation foci, the first of which assesses proximate outcomes (teacher behaviors, attitudes, and opinions) and the second of which assesses distal outcomes (student achievement). Data collected through classroom observations, questionnaires, and interviews were analyzed, as well as test data on students at the PDS sites. Observational data were similar in both PDS and non-PDS schools, although data from the PDS sites produced higher mean scores on many of the variables. There were no statistically significant differences in the test score data for the elementary level, but there was one area of significance for the high school level, as PDS high schools showed higher test scores in a number of areas than non-PDS high schools. The researchers noted

that the “magnitude of the differences was not large” and the analyses were limited by the use of “data from entire schools” (Petrosko & Munzo, 2002, p.28). They stated that “additional analyses would be beneficial, especially with student data from teachers most involved with PDS compared with teachers that are not involved with PDS” and that a thorough application of hierarchical linear modeling needed to be performed with achievement data (Petrosko & Munzo, 2002, p.28).

Summary

Now and in the immediate future, it is likely that PDS evaluation efforts will focus largely on outcomes and impacts of PDS experiences for all stakeholders, particular P-12 students in terms of their demonstrated academic achievement. Additionally, evaluation research will examine the role of the principal more intently to discern how school leadership influences the work of professional development schools. Areas with less substantial evidence in the early research (e.g., longitudinal evaluation studies, follow-up data on PDS prepared teachers, data on research and inquiry efforts within PDSs, and PDS influences on student achievement) will likely be the areas targeted for future research.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This evaluation research study provides an analysis of the school-university partnership known as the Creative Options Partnership in Education (COPE), at the end of its fifth year of operation. The study illustrates how the COPE partnership program progressed in supporting the initial goals the partners had established. The findings inform decision making about the design, resources, and objectives of the partnership.

As noted by Madaus and Kellaghan (2000), there is a range of definitions within the field of evaluation and a great diversity of ideas about what constitutes program evaluation. Whether goal-based, decision-oriented, cost-based, or in the form of expository storytelling, the definitions affect the techniques, kinds of evidence, and the use of findings (Madaus and Kellaghan, 2000).

Program evaluation in this study is rooted in the idea that evaluation may be achieved through expository storytelling for the purposes of helping stakeholders as they consider issues, establish priorities, and manage educational programs from day-to-day. To accomplish this task, I chose a single case study design. Case study research appears frequently throughout the field of education. Merriam (1998) notes that “Guba and Lincoln (1981) conclude that case study is the best reporting form for evaluations” (p. 39). She states that they believe that this method “provides thick description, is

grounded, is holistic and lifelike, simplifies data to be considered by the reader, illuminates meanings, and can communicate tacit knowledge” (p. 39). Thus, the need of this program evaluation to facilitate and explicate understandings of the stakeholders fit well with the purposes of case study research.

Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzpatrick (1997) indicate that the decision about which type of research design to use when conducting a program evaluation depends largely on the research question or questions. If the question(s) are causal, then an experimental or quasi-experimental design is most appropriate. However, if there are descriptive question(s) and the purpose is “to illustrate a process or to describe and analyze a program, process, or procedure” then a method such as case study is a strong choice (p. 272).

The processes used in conducting program evaluation and in conducting case study research are similar. The tools of individual and group interviewing as well as the analysis of survey data and archival documents are common to both types of research, as are the methods of data analysis. The products that result from these types of research studies, however, may vary in their destination. This is a point where an important distinction exists between program evaluation and program evaluation research. Program evaluation often results in reports generated to fulfill the request of stakeholders, funding sources, or other decision-makers. Program evaluation research, while it also provides valuable information to stakeholders, also seeks to contribute to the larger body of research on the program and processes of evaluation in the field.

Creswell (2003) identifies three approaches to research that are defined by the “knowledge claims, the strategies, and the method” (p.18). Quantitative research addresses developing knowledge from a largely postpositivist perspective, with predetermined closed-ended questions, and instruments of inquiry that measure data statistically (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Creswell, 2003). Qualitative research addresses developing knowledge from a more constructivist perspective, allowing data to emerge through open-ended questions and narrative (Thornton, 1993; Green, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Berg, 2001; Creswell, 2003). Mixed method research addresses developing knowledge from a pragmatic problem solving or consequence oriented perspective, applying the strategies of either qualitative or quantitative research as needed to best understand the problem of the study (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Creswell, 2003). A qualitative approach was chosen for this study because of the investigative nature of the research questions. Yin (2002) states that explanatory questions that seek to discover or explore reasons why a program works or how it works are best explored through a qualitative approach like that of case study. This type of approach addresses developing knowledge in a real-life context, exploring variables of interest that emerge from the data and converge in a triangulating fashion around multiple sources of evidence that lead to a more complete understanding of a phenomenon (Bogdin and Biklin, 1998; Stake, 2000; Yin, 2002). This triangulation extends trustworthiness to results of the study, a quality also called validity by some researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Yin, 2002). When exploring the evaluation of a new program like the Creative Options Partnership in

Education program, applying a predetermined design would limit the opportunity to consider alternative variables.

Case Study Design

Case studies may involve multiple or single cases, depending on the circumstances and the needs determined by the research questions. Yin (2002) describes circumstances where single case studies are the most appropriate research design choice. These situations include studies where the case evaluates a set of propositions, investigates a phenomenon previously inaccessible, explores a case that is unique, or as an exploratory prelude to a further study.

Single case studies may be holistic or have embedded units of analysis, such as in an organizational or program case study, like this one, where the process of roles or outcomes of activities are examined. Yin (2002) cautions that in using this approach care must be taken to return from the subunit analysis to that of the larger unit, so that, for example, the program is addressed and not just the projects within it.

One reason for the selection of a qualitative design for this study is the need for an emergent approach, due to the limited number of evaluation studies regarding school-university partnerships and to the limited number of informants in the program.

Qualitative research is especially suited for understanding the meaning and context of events, situations, and the actions of participants through the exploration and analysis of their perspectives. Qualitative research also aids in understanding the process by which decisions are made and by which events and actions take place (Maxwell, 1996; Bogdan and Biklin, 1998). The study of context and process are critical components of the CIPP

and PDS Impact Assessment models of evaluation that are the framework for this study. Greene (2000) explains that qualitative evaluation research seeks to “express the interests of the stakeholders and honor the experiences of those closest to the program evaluated” (p. 985). This task is accomplished within this study through the examination of the roles, relationships, expectations, and desired outcomes of the school and college partners, parts of the PDS Impact Assessment Model and the input and product components of the CIPP evaluation model.

My Role as a Researcher

During this study, I was the primary evaluator, conducting data collection, and analysis of new and existing data. My past experiences as a public school teacher, mentor, partnership liaison, and my experiences as a teacher educator in three small college teacher education programs, provide me with familiarity and understanding of the roles and functions of the stakeholders and of the partnership program itself. I have particular knowledge of the partnership in this study because I worked as a college faculty member and partnership liaison for two years during the initial years of this partnership program. The college began collecting data on the partnership during my time there, and continued systematically to collect annual data in the three years since my departure. Facing increased constraints on resources, the partnership leaders indicated interest in evaluating the progress of the partnership in meeting its initial goals. Thus, my previous relationship with the partners enabled me to obtain support for conducting a summative evaluation of their partnership efforts.

As I knew some of the participants from my previous time working with the college, I took great care and implemented particular measures to reduce bias and to increase the level of trustworthiness of the data. The data were triangulated, and only after data patterns appeared in diverse sources (e.g., interview transcripts, focus group transcripts, archived summary data from surveys and focus groups) were the passages assigned to categories for further analysis. Summary data from the program archives was deidentified before I received them for analysis. Additionally, the interview and focus group participants I interviewed were encouraged to provide clarification and comment before I conducted a comparative analysis of their interviews with other data sources. Throughout the analysis process, I recurrently focused my efforts on allowing the data patterns to emerge naturally without attempting to fit the data into selected evaluation models or my own belief structures. I continually asked myself as researcher critical objective questions about the data and the revealed understandings.

Context of the Study

The two institutional partners exist within a larger community context. The community served by the college and the school is a county of approximately 135,000 people, about one third of who live in the largest city within the county. Most people work in the manufacturing and retail areas, particularly textiles, and recent layoffs and closings have sent the county's unemployment rate to twelve percent as of August 2003. There are three institutions of higher education in the community, two private four-year colleges, and a community college. The school system is a city-county system with 30 schools, more than half of which house elementary levels.

The partner elementary school is a public school serving students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. With over 70 staff members and a diverse population of over 400 students, the school has a full range of programs for exceptional children and draws students from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds. The school has been designated a Title I school by the United States Department of Education and accepts federal Title I funds.

The college partner in this study is a department of teacher education within a small liberal arts church-related college located in the Piedmont region of North Carolina. The college is over a century old and has long prepared teachers and clergy, largely for service in the surrounding communities. Of the teacher licensure programs available to students at the college, the enrollment in the elementary education program is the largest. The student body of the college is less than 20% ethnic minority and is composed largely of middle to upper income students. The teacher education program is less diverse in terms of gender and ethnicity than the overall college population.

Description of the Partnership

The formal partnership between the college and elementary school, which began in 1998, is called COPE (Creative Options Partnership in Education). It is a program linking elementary education majors and college faculty with experienced practicing classroom teachers and students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. The program is designed to provide academic support to the children at the elementary school, ongoing clinical experience for preservice teacher candidates majoring in Elementary Education,

and opportunities for professional development for faculty and administration from both institutions.

History

Initial conversations regarding a formal partnership began in 1997 between the chairperson of the teacher education unit at the college and the partner school principal. Attempts to form a partnership in the decade prior, though supported by the collegiate faculty, had not received support from the public school system superintendent. However, during the 1997-1998 school year an investigation committee of volunteers was formed consisting of teachers from the proposed partner school and college faculty. The result was an agreement presented to the school board and superintendent requesting permission to pilot a partnership program between the two institutions. The proposed agreement, which was approved by the board, included six initial goals designed collaboratively by the investigation committee for the Creative Options Partnership in Education (Appendix A).

Restructuring

With school board approval secured in the spring of 1998, the college approved a restructuring of the curriculum within the elementary education major in the fall of 1998 to allow for methods classes in a sequenced block of time, providing extended time for clinical experiences. Science, social studies, language arts, and reading methods courses merged into two six-hour courses, one each semester. Mathematics and fine arts methodology courses remained separate classes, but were assigned meeting times adjacent to the larger methods block. Another curricular change occurred with the merger

of separate educational psychology and classroom management courses into two three-hour curriculum and instruction courses, one each semester. Teams of college faculty from the department of education worked together to teach these classes. They aligned the topics on the syllabi with those in the blocked methods courses and with the site-based junior level experiences at the partner school.

Partnership Program Components

Cohorts of preservice teacher candidates began clinical experiences at the partnership school site during their sophomore year through a series of brief interactions planned to facilitate assignments given in introductory gateway college courses in education and psychology. The preservice teachers continued with a junior level internship of over 70 clinical hours. During this two-semester internship, methodology courses in core subjects (math, science, social studies, language arts/reading, and integrated arts) aligned through a block schedule with specific clinical experiences on-site at the elementary partner school. The preservice teachers, also called COPE interns during this time, observed, planned, and taught lessons to large and small groups of elementary children in all core subject areas. Experienced classroom teachers, also known as COPE mentor teachers, as well as college methods instructors observed the interns teaching the elementary school children, and provided both written and oral evaluations during three-way conferences. Each mentor teacher provided an evaluation conference and wrote a summative assessment of the intern's performance. The teachers, preservice and experienced, then discussed this evaluation together at the end of the junior internship.

Preservice interns participated in a one-on-one reading diagnosis and remediation tutorial in the primary grades for one month, and a mathematics tutorial in the upper elementary grades for three months. The interns watched demonstration lessons taught to the elementary school children by their college methods instructors or master teachers from the partner school faculty and participated in follow up discussions with the instructor.

At the end of the junior year, interns had an opportunity to submit applications to student teach at the partner school. Following an evaluation of their applications, the principal and a panel of teachers from the school interviewed the finalists. Student teachers who were not selected or chose not to apply to teach at the partner school completed their 15-week practicum at other area public elementary schools.

Annually, public school faculty, preservice interns, student teachers, college faculty, and school administrators participated in COPE orientation sessions held for junior interns. They also participated in joint staff development in the form of workshops and retreats.

Governance

In 1999, an advisory committee replaced the original investigation/steering committee and a formal governance structure was adopted. The advisory committee included the two coordinators (a classroom teacher who served as the partnership liaison at the school and a professor that served as the partnership liaison at the college), the elementary school principal, the chairperson from the department of education at the college, and a partnership consultant.

While the COPE coordinators made the day-to-day decisions for the program in consultation with various institutional leaders, the advisory committee monitored structural changes and financial considerations. The position of coordinator was established in 1999 and was originally a college faculty member. It was recognized as a joint appointment with two coordinators, one at each site, in 2000-2001. The position shifted to an on-site coordinator/clinical adjunct (full time classroom teacher) at the school for the school year 2001-2002, and then returned to two coordinators, one from each partner in 2002-2003.

Following an initial gift of seed money from the college, the partnership obtained financial support by securing three grants from local philanthropic foundations and through the continued use of dedicated funds from the college. From 1999-2003, the college supported the partnership annually through dedicated funds, and in 2001 began providing a stipend for the partnership coordinator based at the school.

Formative Program Evaluation

At the close of each academic year, the advisory committee designated a researcher to collect data from the interns, mentors, and college faculty through surveys and focus groups for the purpose of formative assessment to inform decision-making and assess immediate needs. Since 1999, achievement data on students who participated in the spring tutorial have been reviewed. Advisory committee members discussed summaries of the data over the summer and made program changes as needed.

Participants

The college-public school partnership, Creative Options Partnership in Education (COPE), between the college and an elementary school was the research site for this study. Participants were selected based on their decision-making roles within the partnership and the participants' willingness to be part of the study. At the site, three participants representing both school-based and college-based stakeholders were interviewed individually and one focus group was conducted with representative stakeholders from three stakeholder groups. The interview questions were sequenced to inform the context, input, process, and product evaluation portions of the overall program evaluation (Appendix B) and to reflect the program goals (Appendix A). The focus group question (Appendix C) targeted the product portion of the evaluation process.

The individual interview participants were chosen because of their critical decision-making roles within the partnership, and their participation in earlier data collection conducted by the partnership under the auspices of the college had been limited. Before this study, no one-on-one interview data existed with these participants, and their participation had been limited to questionnaire and focus group responses during annual formative evaluations. In addition, previous data collection during annual formative evaluations had segregated the stakeholder groups for focus group discussions, and the stakeholders had not been explicitly questioned on the topic of partnership outcomes. For this reason, I conducted a focus group interview with a mix of stakeholder representatives. Finally, I analyzed multiple sources of archived data evidence that represented the various populations of stakeholders. I completed this analysis to provide

an important longitudinal picture of the development of the partnership over the last five years and to triangulate with the new sources of data.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were gathered from both new and archived sources: (a) three partnership leader interviews, (b) one focus group with a mix of stakeholder representatives, (c) annual survey data from stakeholder groups over five years (summaries), (d) transcripts of annual stakeholder focus groups (summaries), (e) annual program evaluation surveys completed by school staff (summaries), (f) minutes of meetings by the COPE Advisory Committee (archived records). Data were collected from the first two sources during the 2003-2004 academic year. The remaining sources were collected annually from 1998-99 to 2002-2003 by the college on behalf of the partnership for formative assessment purposes. The following paragraphs provide descriptions of each data source.

Interviews with Partnership Leaders

During the 2003-2004 academic year, I conducted semi-structured interviews individually with three partnership leaders. I chose personal interviews because the technique afforded a depth of information and the opportunity for clarification and probing (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997). I developed an interview protocol with a set of 10 questions (Appendix B) to gather information about the leaders' perceptions of the partnership program. As the interviews were semi-structured, some of the questions that I asked were identical, but some were different. Questions were more or less structured to allow the opportunity to ask additional questions to probe for more

information concerning earlier answers given by respondents (Crowl, 1996; Merriam, 1998).

In these partner leader interviews, I asked open-ended questions that were sequenced to inform various types of evaluation (context, input, process, and product) within the CIPP evaluation model and the areas within Teitel's PDS Impact Assessment model (Figure 1 in Chapter I), as well as to reflect the program goals (Appendix A). The interviews took place at the college and the partner school. The interviews were audio taped and the tapes were transcribed to provide a more exact record for analysis.

Focus Group of Stakeholders

I conducted a focus group with respondents from three stakeholder groups (preservice interns, practicing mentor teachers, and college faculty) at the partner school site in 2003-2004. I chose this technique because of the opportunity to build on the group process and use the ideas or issues raised to obtain reactions from others in the group (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997). During the interview, I posed a predetermined open-ended question and encouraged the participants to comment on it and to participate in the resulting group dialogue.

Program Records

A number of records exist that provide evidence of formal and informal program assessment that has been ongoing within the Creative Options Partnership in Education over the past five years. The information gained from analysis of written records is important because such information may not be available in spoken form, and because the records provide historical insight (Hodder, 2000).

I analyzed summaries of survey and focus group data from the last five years, compiled annually by the college on behalf of the partnership. Most of the survey instruments and focus group protocols were closely aligned with the six partnership goals, and thus provided a valuable data source. Merriam (1998) states that a researcher can judge the value of a data source by asking if it contains information or insights relevant to the research questions. Since both the research questions and the archived survey and focus group data clearly reflect the initial partnership goals, this data source was a natural choice. In addition, I examined the minutes of the COPE Advisory Committee from the archived program records.

In the summary reports, individual responses had been de-identified and typewritten to protect confidentiality. The stakeholder groups represented in the survey data included preservice interns, former interns, practicing mentor teachers, partner school staff, and college faculty. The survey instruments asked the same questions from year to year, thus allowing me to identify possible changes in data variables over time (Crowl, 1996; Bogdan and Biklin, 1998).

The following crosswalk (Table 1) shows the relationship of the data sources to the research questions.

Table 1 Research Crosswalk: Creative Options Partnership in Education						
Data Sources:						
A = Partnership Leader Interviews		D = Stakeholder Focus Grp Summaries*				
B = Mixed Stakeholders Focus Grp		E = Staff Survey Summaries *				
C = Summaries of Stakeholder Surveys		* F = Committee Minutes *				
*Archived sources						
Research Questions	A	B	C	D	E	F
In what ways, if any, has the partnership program implemented changes intended to improve the quality of teacher preparation?	X	X	X	X	X	X
In what ways, if any, has the partnership implemented changes intended to influence the professional roles of the educators involved?	X	X	X	X	X	X
In what ways, if any, has the partnership implemented changes to assist educators in identifying connections between classroom practice and educational theory?	X	X	X	X	X	X
In what ways, if any, has the partnership implemented changes intended to produce measurable improvements in classroom learning?	X	X	X	X	X	X
In what ways, if any, has the partnership implemented changes intended to facilitate the practice of inquiry?			X	X		
What have been the results of these implemented changes?					X	X

I analyzed the data for emergent patterns and themes and then examined the resulting patterns to identify relationships or connections to the partnership goals and to the evaluation categories within the CIPP and PDS Impact Assessment Model (Figure 1 in Chapter 1). My examination included both the newly collected data and archival data sources, collected as part of annual program assessment from 1998-2003, to identify

similarities in responses across the texts. Using both electronic qualitative analysis software and traditional physical coding strategies, the data were searched and broken down systematically into manageable units. I converted the data that were in electronic form into a “text only” format and imported them into NUD*IST qualitative data analysis software. Using the software program, I individually “browsed” the texts and coded text selections where similarities appeared. Reading the text carefully, I grouped the selections into categories or “nodes” according to the similarities that emerged. I then conducted text searches of the imported texts to locate additional selections or undetected categories. I added the results to the existing “nodes” or established new “nodes” if necessary. Text selections may be assigned categories or “nodes” of two types, “free nodes” (categories that are not linked to any other ones), or “tree nodes” (categories that are hierarchically related). I assigned the emergent categories as “free nodes” because I did not have a predetermined idea of what related ideas I would encounter. Next, I examined program documents that were not in electronic form, and I coded words and phrases traditionally. From this analysis, I assigned text selections to twenty initial categories. I then electronically examined the text selections in each of these “free nodes” and collapsed those nodes that had fewer selections, assigning those text pieces to existing nodes where there were connections. Through this sorting process, I narrowed the twenty initial nodes to twelve and repeated the process. This second review narrowed the themes or categories to five.

Figure 2 illustrates the compression of the twenty loose categories, or “free nodes” into twelve tight categories, or “tree nodes”, and finally into five themes.

Figure 2 Category Compression

20 "Loose" Categories	12 "Tight" Categories	5 Themes
1. Theory Into Practice 2. Reflective Practice	1. Theory Into Practice 2. Reflective Practice	1. Connections that enhance practice
3. Benefits for the P-5 children 4. Issues of Measurable Outcomes	3. Benefits for the P-5 children 4. Issues of Measurable Outcomes	2. Benefits for the P-5 children
5. Functions of the Advisory Committee 6. Program Evaluation 7. Leadership 8. Communication 9. Time	5. Functions of the Advisory Committee 6. Leadership 7. Communication (time)	3. Communication
10. Relationships and bonding 11. Understanding The School Partner 12. Understanding The Teacher Education Program 13. Attitudinal changes 14. Overall Effects of COPE 15. Teacher Empowerment 16. Questions about Teacher Education	8. Relationships and Bonding 9. Overall effects of COPE 10. Teacher Empowerment 11. Impact on Interns	4. Relationships and bonding
17. Impact on Interns 18. Funding and Resources Issues 19. Future of the Partnership 20. People As Assets And Problems	12. Funding and Resources Issues	5. Funding and Resources Issues

Trustworthiness of the Study

Merriam (1998) states that consumers of research need to be able to know that results of research are trustworthy. Evaluative studies are often used by decision-makers to inform their actions regarding program changes, and this fact magnifies the critical nature of this necessary element. Green (2000), in her discussion of qualitative evaluative research, writes of the parallels between the conventional inquiry criteria (validity and reliability) and the criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative research.

In qualitative research, a researcher demonstrates trustworthiness when he or she provides sufficient details to illustrate logic and clarity in the conclusions presented (Merriam, 1998, Green, 2000). Trustworthiness also increases when the researcher follows protocols in data collection and in appropriate data analysis procedures (Merriam, 1998). Furthermore, the level of trust rises when readers know that the researcher has invited interview and focus group participants to provide comments regarding the accuracy of the categories, themes, and conclusions of the findings, a practice known as member checking (Merriam, 1998; Green, 2000; Janesick, 2000). Participants in this study were given opportunities to provide comment regarding the conclusions of the data through telephone calls and personal contacts. For example, conversations with partner leaders confirmed the conclusion that the perception of a lack of institutional recognition of the partnership existed as was recognized in the data by the researcher.

Triangulation, the use of multiple sources to confirm the same fact or phenomenon, promotes the trustworthiness of the findings (Stake, 1995, 2000; Yin, 2002). Green (2000) explains that in qualitative program evaluation studies techniques

such as “sampling for diversity, triangulating for agreement, and monitoring for bias” are common (p.991). In this study, triangulation is achieved through the collection of data representing multiple perspectives (partnership leaders, preservice interns, teacher education faculty, partner school mentor teachers), as well as through varied data collection methods (individual interviews, focus group interviews, partnership records analysis).

Summary

Green (2000) in discussing the challenges of qualitative research in evaluation studies, explains that questions of quality of inquiry, researcher presence, and evaluation purposes are more explicitly present with qualitative studies because “this evaluation genre explicitly acknowledges the value strands of knowledge claims”(p. 991). Evaluation practiced qualitatively implies “inclusiveness of perspective and voice,” seeking both the “usually vocal and unusual silent stakeholders” (Green, 2000, p. 992). This study addresses these silent stakeholders in the individual interviews. In previous formative evaluations, the partner leaders’ individual insights were not included, especially that of the school leader. The study provides a continued voice for the more vocal stakeholders, and offered the opportunity for these stakeholders to dialogue in a mixed focus group, an approach which had not been a part of the formative in-house evaluations the partnership had conducted.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings from an analysis of the data gathered from partnership leaders, other stakeholder representatives, and from program records. Examination of these data revealed categories that emerged and converged around five themes. These themes are (a) connections that enhance practice, (b) relationships and bonding, (c) communication, (d) benefits to the children, and (e) funding and resource issues.

Emergent Themes

Connections that Enhance Practice

The theme of connections that enhance practice is best defined as improvements in teaching practices that are directly related to partnership events, experiences, or activities that provide the stakeholders (interns, mentor teachers, teacher education faculty) with authentic direct engagement in the teaching and learning process. Evidence of this theme included opportunities to (a) discuss teaching practice, (b) connect theory to practice, (c) reflect on current and past teaching behaviors, and (d) engage in professional development.

For preservice interns in the COPE partnership, the ability to discuss their newly experienced teaching practices was valued. Whether teaching and tutoring the children, engaging in seminars with the COPE liaison, or participating in three-way post-teaching conferences with mentor teachers and college faculty, opportunities to discuss teaching provided a feeling of connection that was viewed as positive. During the stakeholder focus group, intern Beth described the COPE mathematics tutorial as an activity that left her feeling better prepared for mathematics instruction in her future classroom.

Also the math tutoring that we do for 5th graders has helped me feel more comfortable with students that may need help a little more, you know, because they do need help with the EOGs and stuff like that. That (experience) has definitely made me feel more comfortable in the classroom (Beth, stakeholder focus group, 2003-04).

Beth then related how she resolved concerns or questions regarding communication with the students she was tutoring. She had conversations and got advice about her practice from COPE mentor teachers or teacher education faculty.

Because I struggle sometimes, but I know ...she (mentor teacher) will come over there and talk to me and the child and not make me feel stupid because I don't know what the answer was, and she makes it where I understand and if the student doesn't understand I can explain it to him. It is definitely a good feeling (Beth, stakeholder focus group, 2003-04).

Teaching opportunities, through tutoring and through the practice lessons in the mentor teacher's classroom, have expanded the time available to have specific exchanges about direct teaching experiences on the part of the interns. As partner leader Chris pointed out, the conversations about teaching happened earlier in the teacher preparation

path for preservice teachers as a result of having the opportunities to teach and discuss practice with the COPE mentor teachers.

Before COPE, those conversations happened not until student teaching, the students didn't have any experience during their junior year before they came in (as student teachers). They (the preservice teachers) had that ten weeks of student teaching and that was the time you had to build their confidence and make them comfortable and figure out how to help them figure out things they did not understand. Ten weeks is just not long enough to do that (Chris, partner leader interview, 2003-2004).

Discussions around the topic of teaching appeared in the survey responses of the interns who responded annually to a question about the types of activities they engaged in through the partnership program. Intern responses each year included references to conversations or discussions about teaching practices.

(I have been involved in) conversing with students and cooperating (school-based) teachers; I have interviewed several teachers regarding technology, cooperative learning, and federal regulations (intern surveys, 1998-99).

(The most helpful parts of COPE are) observations by professors; Comments on lessons by mentor teacher (intern surveys, 1999-00).

A weekly seminar which became part of the program during the third year provided an additional forum for the preservice interns and practicing mentor teachers to dialogue about teaching and learning and about the routines and culture of school life. Partner leader Chris mentioned this seminar in her interview as a place for interns to ask questions and make important connections between the pieces of their experiences. She stated that, "The seminars help connect theory to practice" (Chris, partner leader

interview, 2003-04). Comments by the interns on annual surveys also mentioned this structured group discussion with the COPE liaison, a teacher at the partner school, as one of the most beneficial parts of the program. Comments included “one of the most beneficial parts of COPE is the seminars with (the COPE liaison); seminars with (the COPE liaison) were most beneficial” (intern surveys, 2000-01).

The COPE Advisory Committee took note early of the positive response to the seminars, and minutes from the COPE Advisory Committee meetings show the support for these dialogue opportunities.

It was generally agreed that additional seminars led by (the COPE liaison) would be beneficial to the interns. We only had one, led by (the principal and the liaison) due to weather and other scheduling conflicts during the 1999-2000 year. The interns remarked most favorably about this seminar. (The partner leaders from the college) indicated that they would try to work on a way to schedule them into the methods block of time (Minutes, COPE Advisory Committee, May 2000).

Three-way conferences (intern, mentor, and teacher education faculty) arranged after each of the intern’s lessons, provided dedicated time to discuss specific teaching practices. Interns were provided with oral and written feedback about what had been observed by both the teacher education faculty member and by the mentor teacher. They were also given the opportunity to share in post teaching self-analysis.

It appeared in the data that these follow-up experiences had become less frequent, as teacher education faculty members began spending less time at the partner school. Partner leaders, Ross and Evelyn, lamented the lack of time spent on site by the teacher education faculty. Ross said, “I’m spending less time at the partner elementary school

than I once did, I've never spent enough time" and Evelyn concurred "I wish they were here more, I don't think they're here enough" (partner leader interviews, 2003-04).

Although the conferences were difficult to schedule, comments on the annual surveys given to interns mentioned the value that the interns place on the three-way conferencing experience.

(One of the most beneficial parts of the program is) being observed by professors and school-based educators, (which) allows for lots of feedback (intern surveys 1999-00).

(One of the most beneficial parts of the program) for me is the three-way conference after lessons; the positive feedback from the mentor teachers (intern surveys, 2000-01).

(One of the most beneficial parts of the program) for me is the formal conference with college-based educators after lessons are taught (intern surveys, 2000-2001).

Stakeholders (interns, mentor teachers, and teacher education faculty) discussed the ability of the COPE interns to connect theory learned in the college classroom to actual classroom practice witnessed and experienced at the partner school. This connection, designed to enhance practice, is the one mentioned most frequently in the data sources and appeared to be a focal point tied to the goals of program. During the stakeholder focus group, mentor teacher Mary referred to the original goals.

From a teacher's point of view, I think that we are accomplishing the goals that we set out to do and number three too – "close the gap between educational theory and the wisdom of practice", (that goal) I think is the best, is the (one which has the) most impact (Mary, stakeholder focus group, 2003-04).

Partner leaders agreed with the stakeholders that the connections were happening and that in their view they were valuable. Partner leader Ross gave an example of the connection of behaviorist theory to strategies for teaching reading and related how that linked into what the interns experienced at the partner school.

So now that COPE is here there is a much stronger connection between theory and practice in the real world. I think in every lesson that they do, I mean if you talk about reading diagnosis, that's a good piece. In class we learn about behaviorism and Skinner and Thorndike and we try and expose them to the philosophical underpinnings of behaviorism. Right, and um, and then in the reading course (the instructor) is taking words and breaking down morphemes and phonetic analysis and all these sorts of behaviorally driven sorts of things and so they get the theory in the course and the instruction of it in methods and then they go into that real world setting (the partnership activities) and actually get to do it (Ross, partner leader interview, 2003-04).

Partner leader, Chris, recounted the original design of the partnership program to connect the theoretical content learned at the college site with the direct classroom experiences, but she noted that she did not think it was aligned that way any longer.

Early on, I don't think it's still working this way, but the intent of the design was that they would learn about a particular kind of lesson, you know, the constructivist approach and they'd talk about all the different theories and then they'd have the experience during their clinical time that was supposed to give them an opportunity to practice that, so when you're asking, "How was it designed?" That was the design. And that certainly improved the quality of their teacher preparation. Instead of seeing things as disconnected theory at the university that's in books and really doesn't have anything to do with classroom practice, and then (seeing) stuff you do at the partner school with kids that really doesn't have anything to do with what goes on at the university. I think that's what was happening before we designed the partnership the way it is (Chris, partner leader interview, 2003-04).

The effects of this design were supported in the survey data that affirmed the assertion that the COPE interns made the connections between theory and practice. Interns gave specific descriptions of situations where they were able to identify models of instruction or management strategies previously discussed in the college classroom, and connected what they saw to the underlying theories behind those practices. Interns also indicated that experiencing these connective episodes that linked theory to practice helped them better understand the material and made it clearer for them so that they could articulate it on assessments in the college classroom.

The experiences that COPE has provided me with have given me concrete situations that I can use to describe many abstract theories. I have also been able to practice teaching in positive environments that have helped my grades due to my abilities of application (intern survey, 1998-99).

Another intern the next year reiterated the ability to link theory to practice while participating in the activities of the partnership.

When testing in theory class, I have been able to make connections between the material and my experiences at the partner school. On the last module assessment I was able to apply my experiences at the partner school to the test (intern survey 1999-2000).

Teacher education faculty also realized the interns were making these connections. On a survey in 2001-02, a faculty member indicated, "The field experiences have allowed the interns to put theory into practice, and to implement methods and strategies they've been taught." Again in 2002-03, this connection was mentioned, "I

think it helps students to connect theory with practice” (Teacher Education faculty surveys).

To facilitate reflective practice, interns wrote class assignments about the connections between theory and practice in a series of reflective essays. Interns mentioned these assignments in the annual surveys as a place that allowed them to practice articulating the connections they were making cognitively.

I feel that the COPE interns have a deeper knowledge base concerning the education of students. We have had many opportunities to learn a theoretical base and then go into classrooms at the partner school to put these theories into practice. We have also been required to reflect about our experiences more often, thus improving our ability to do so (intern survey, 1999-00).

These assignments were mentioned also in survey data from teacher education faculty who reported various opinions as to whether the connections were clear. Some were more skeptical, as illustrated by one teacher educator at the college who stated his or her doubt on a survey in 2001-02.

I have been disappointed. Their (the interns’) journaling reflections leave much to be desired. That does not mean that I do not think they are making these connections. They are, to some degree, but their comments are still more descriptive than analytical (teacher education faculty, survey, 2001-02).

Another teacher educator that same year, however, pointed to the written reflective pieces as “the strongest evidence” where “an intern might discuss how a previous belief (about a theory) had changed” (teacher education faculty survey,

2001-2002). Comments from mentor teachers support both views, some indicating that they saw the interns making few connections between theory and practice and others indicating they saw connection happening quite often.

I had two very different experiences. One, you could really tell that they were putting it together and then others, they just didn't get it. Everything was just, check off what I had to do never really putting together what that had to do with (mentor teacher focus group, 2002-03).

Connections that enhanced teaching practice were present not only for the COPE interns, but also for other stakeholders as well. COPE mentors and teacher education faculty described connections that were real and authentic, but these educators were more attuned to thinking about their own teaching practice reflectively, rather than the teaching acts of others often cited by the interns. Reasons noted in the data for this increased level of metacognition were the increased attention given to best practice and the belief that their practice was a model for the preservice interns. In the summary of comments from mentor teacher surveys, teachers affirmed this idea. The following statements appeared on the survey summary for 2001-02.

It (COPE) has helped me to realize that as a professional educator, I set the example by my teaching style and methods for others to follow; I am more reflective because of the COPE program, because I want to be sure I am showing my intern the most effective teaching practice; The COPE program, and by having a junior intern, has helped me grow professionally; Being able to observe my intern doing her teaching made me aware of certain things (mentor teacher surveys, 2001-02).

Partner leaders discussed the evidence of reflective behavior that they saw in the stakeholders and recounted their own experiences with reflection. Teacher education

faculty mentioned their own reflective thoughts in terms of their instructional practice. Thus, the data sources converged around this theme for all stakeholders from multiple perspectives.

I think they (mentor teachers) are more careful. I think they really do feel the power they have to influence these young teachers. I think they think now about what they do and what they say. I really do (Evelyn, partner leader interview, 2003-04).

Interns also reported hearing peers discussing their experiences more reflectively, and report that they were “more thoughtful and metacognitive” and “much more likely to think before opening their mouths” (intern surveys, 1999-00).

Specific opportunities for professional development mentioned in the data included mentors and college faculty teaching demonstration lessons, attending workshops together on topics like technology, multicultural education, literacy, and planning sessions with interns before practice lessons with follow up conferences. These activities are documented in the Advisory Committee minutes for April of 2001 and January of 2000.

In individual interviews, partner leaders commented about the ability of the partnership activities to enhance professional development for the mentor teachers. Professional development in this context included traditional instructional workshops and learning opportunities, as well as collegial dialogue that resulted in changes in attitudes or perspectives. The mentor teachers themselves affirmed the expansion and, in some cases, transformation of their thinking about their instructional practices. Partner leader Evelyn stated, “It’s been an empowering experience. It really has been affirming, you know, that

they (the mentor teachers) have some worth” (partner leader interview, 2003-2004).

Partner leader Chris made similar comments in her interview, mentioning the increased excitement connected to the professional dialogue and opportunities to share.

The classroom teachers have a renewed enthusiasm to the whole idea of teaching. In some ways because they are having a chance to talk about why they do what they do with young educators. That excites them and so they become more of an asset than they were beforehand (Chris, partner leader interview, 2003-04).

Not only were mentor teachers involved in professional development opportunities, but interns mentioned the value of them as well.

I will be able to apply some of the strategies I learned in the program to my future classroom. The main one that I remember is thinking maps. I had not realized the variety and extent of the use of the thinking maps. I am glad that we had that seminar with the reading specialist (Intern surveys, 2000-01).

The minutes of the COPE Advisory Committee reflect planning for professional development workshops, such as one conducted on integrating technology into teaching practice.

(School leaders) inquired about the possibility of staff development for teachers, interns, and college faculty. (College partners) agreed with them that technology in-service would be desirable, and the Education Dept. Chairperson agreed to approach several instructors about helping lead workshops as areas of interest were identified (COPE Advisory Committee Minutes, July 2000).

The PDS Impact Assessment Model incorporates the first theme, connections to enhanced practice, in the component of the model called “assessment of best practice in

teaching, learning, and leadership” (Teitel, 2003). The traditional CIPP model of evaluation used as a parallel in this study addresses these practices in terms of the “process” element of the evaluation, or the actual implementation of the activities of the program (Stufflebeam, 2002).

Best practice as defined by Lee Teitel (2000) in the PDS Impact Assessment model includes both the teaching and learning experiences of the stakeholders in the PDS, but also changes in the belief structure of the partnering organizations. Teitel proposes that “changes in the belief structure-the philosophy that underlies the teaching and learning and leadership practices- are as important as the actual changes in classroom practices” (2000, p.6). His belief is that such changes in values have implications for the organizations as a whole in terms of policies and could impact other innovations that may coincide with the partnership experience (Teitel, 2000). In the case of COPE, it is clear that not only structural programmatic changes have occurred, but also philosophical ones.

Relationships and Bonding

The COPE partnership is a human relationship that has evolved and changed over time. The second theme, relationship and bonding, is defined as stakeholder interactions and perceptions that shape (a) collaborative work, (b) perceived effectiveness, and (c) the sense of support and stability for individuals and stakeholder groups.

As the COPE partnership has matured, the data indicate that the relationships and bonding between the stakeholders have grown as well. Evidence of collaborative relationships appeared in the comments of the COPE partner leaders, such as Ross, who

referred to the partnership liaison as “a member of the (college) faculty” (partner leader interview, 2003-04).

During the stakeholder focus group, intern Diana shared that she felt supported and that the teachers modeled that support by how they treated one another. Mentor teacher Helen responded to that observation.

I would like to think that the partner elementary school’s special and I hear it sometimes from other people, so I guess it’s not just me, but I think that’s how we treat each other in the school. I think if anybody needs anything we’re right there to support them and I appreciate you sharing that with me that you know that anywhere you went and anything you needed, you’re going to have that support. That it’s not only going to last you during this time and during your student teaching time, but I feel like if somebody went to another school, and I’ve had that happen, that they could (and do) call me up and say “Oh, I remember that lesson that you were teaching, could you write a few things down or could I borrow...?” Sure, that’s what it’s all about (Helen, stakeholder focus group, 2003-04).

The partnership activity that appeared to support these maturing relationships the most was the annual stakeholder retreat in which mentor teachers, interns, and teacher education faculty went to a conference center and participated in team building and planning exercises. Evidence of planning and follow-up evaluation of the retreats was in the Advisory Committee minutes in the spring (planning) and fall (follow-up) of each year.

Retreat follow-up: The COPE liaison provided an oral summary of the COPE retreat evaluation responses. Negative and positive responses were discussed. The need for funding for the next retreat, the issue of paid reservations for “no-shows”, and the need to avoid scheduling close to report card/grading period dates were discussed as well. It was noted that the survey responses were overall very positive (COPE Advisory Committee Minutes, October 2000).

Partner leader Chris discussed the purpose of the retreat in her interview, noting that the primary intention of the gathering was to facilitate building relationships among the stakeholders.

The retreats are intentionally designed for...the ...I guess that's where I can say...the retreat is the one piece that is intentionally designed for all the stakeholders to see themselves, not as three separate bodies, but as one big team working collaboratively. I do believe the retreat makes that collaboration easier (Chris, partner leader interview, 2003-04).

The college partner, as evidenced by a comment on a survey from a teacher education faculty member, believes participation in the partnership improves collaborative skills.

I give something but I also receive much. I share my experiences with the interns and give them feedback on lessons they have prepared and/or taught. I improve my collaborative skills through interaction with the school-based educators. Some teachers have consulted me for input in their teaching and ways to mentor the interns. In turn, I am given opportunities to view and experience teaching through the eyes of prospective educators and veteran colleagues. By conversing with school-based educators, I can stay current and informed of programs, materials, resources, etc. utilized in the schools (teacher education faculty survey, 2001-2002).

There is some evidence that the teacher education faculty saw their own roles differently during the partnering experience than before the partnership started. A topical strand appeared in the data around the idea of perceived effectiveness, or how the partners (teacher educators and partner school members) felt their purposes were perceived by one another and by their constituents. Also included in this view is their

interpretation of their own purpose and status. Data revealed concerns about such issues as credibility, competence, and understandings of current programs and practices used in schools today. In the interviews and focus group, the college partners mentioned feeling an increased credibility among both their students (the interns) and the teachers at the partner school. Comments in the data included this remark by a teacher educator from the college:

I would hope that if you went in and talked to the teachers at the partner school they would say, “you know he respects me” or “he has respect for teachers”, not, “he is coming in with all the answers” (Ross, partner leader interview, 2003-04).

Survey data from teacher education faculty affirmed this desire (by the college faculty) to be viewed as credible and supportive by the other stakeholders, and the data confirm experiences that reinforced that view. One teacher educator commented in the annual survey data about experiences teaching demonstration lessons and tutoring at the school. A comment from an archived survey summary described how the COPE interns received the experience of seeing the college faculty member in that authentic role as a teacher of school-aged children. In addressing a question about how the partnership had influenced the roles as professional educators, one faculty member responded in the following way.

I find that being allowed to deliver demonstration lessons has helped my students view me as being able to deliver lessons to third and fourth graders rather than just talk about it. They (COPE interns) tell me that when I tutor a child they better understand the importance of pacing and spontaneity (teacher education faculty survey data, 2001-02).

Concerns about the perceived effectiveness of teacher education faculty were mentioned in the partner leader interviews. Ross described a situation where he perceived that the partner school teachers viewed selected teacher education faculty as ineffective.

We had a former faculty member who I have a lot of respect for, has tremendous intellect and tremendous ability, and yet that person was widely perceived by people at the partner school and people here as being ineffective and as a result of that, that person's contract was not renewed ...what we had in the past was (a situation) that some of our faculty was perceived as incompetent, out of touch with the real world, not having had experience in the school (Ross, partner leader interview, 2003-04).

Partner leader Chris also commented on perceptions of teacher education faculty in terms of the time spent at the partner school site during partnership activities. She points out decisions made by teacher education partners regarding their role in the supervision and culture of the partnership.

The program gives them (teacher education faculty) access to a building of real live children so that the clinical piece of their program can happen. Um...quite honestly I'm not sure I see this as a good thing but their need to work on some of their other stuff is met when the students are in clinical, that gives them hours that under a different set of circumstances they would be involved in direct classroom teaching on campus. Certainly what happens in the schools needs to inform the practice of the university professors (Chris, partner leader interview, 2003-04).

Through comments in the data, all stakeholders (partner leaders, interns, and mentor teachers) shared a belief that the teacher education faculty partners were using the school as a resource to find out about what was currently happening in the field. For example, the teacher education faculty learned what instructional and assessment

programs were currently in use by the state or local school system. Survey data from the teacher education faculty and mentor teachers confirm this view. This idea was clear in a recollection by Chris during her interview. She recalled a conversation that she had with a teacher education faculty member, in which the faculty member realized the need to correlate content in her preparatory course with the most current approaches seen in action at the partner school.

I remember her saying, “You know, I’m going to need to explain that differently to my students from now on because there’s been a real shift in the way they’re doing that and the terminology that I am using is not matching the terminology the teachers are using in the classroom and so no wonder our students are confused” (Chris, partner interview, 2003-04).

The PDS Impact Assessment model addresses changes in roles, structures, and culture in terms of how the stakeholders use their time and view their collaborative relationship. Teitel (2000) emphasizes the need for partnerships to “have an impact beyond mere structural rearrangements” and offers as an example the development of roles that cross over institutional boundaries (p.5). This cross over element developed in the COPE partnership during the second year of operation when a mentor teacher was appointed on-site director. In the three years since that time, the position has evolved into a clinical adjunct faculty position.

The need for an on-site administrative position dedicated solely to the needs of the partnership was mentioned in the three partner leader interviews as well as in Advisory Committee Minutes and focus group discussions. Chris recounted efforts to gain institutional approval for such a position.

We can't do without (an on-site director) after they've lost it. And it seems just really sad to me and really frustrating, to know what a good job we're doing preparing teachers and what a difference we're making in the lives of children and practicing teachers but we never found a way to convince the people who hold the purse strings and write the budgets to make us a ...to legitimize us. It's not like we're a critical piece of what they are about and I know that we are. So I guess ...I know it can happen and I know it should happen and I could even make a list for them about how it can happen and what resources we need but no matter how hard we try they're not ready to hear what we have to say. We have "stuff", I mean we have computers and software and we have classroom materials that ought to be on the asset list but they are not the primary asset of the partnership. We're doing such a good job but we don't have the resources that we need to do the job I know we could do. We don't have the people resources. We don't have anybody either at the university or the school who has the time it really takes to do this right and that contributes to some of the problems we have in the communication. We don't have the financial resources we need for the day to day operations. We have no financial resources to even buy stamps or make copies. We are always playing catch-up in terms of figuring out where things that most organizations take for granted are (Chris, partner leader interview, 2003-04).

The data indicated that a sense of support and stability existed among most stakeholders, particularly the interns and mentor teachers. During the stakeholder focus group, COPE intern Beth discussed the support she felt from her mentor teacher and how this support helped her feel more comfortable teaching and risking failure.

That's definitely what I liked, the support. Because me and (another intern) were talking, and we knew that when we student taught, (even) if we didn't get to student teach here (or) when we got a job wherever, we knew that we would have (mentor teacher), we'd have (mentor teacher) and (mentor teacher). We knew that we could call and they would help us in any way possible and that is the way that the others at the college feel about the teachers they are working with. That has been a blessing because I went to (mentor teacher) and she's helped me get my lessons ready. I come and I work with the kids; and you know, when I get up there it's like "Hey, whatever, she's back there if I need her", and she even walked out of the room during the first lesson I taught because she had to go do

something with her son and that made me feel so good. She had the confidence in me and respected me and knew that I could handle myself without her being in there with me (Beth, focus group, 2003-2004).

Partner leader Chris noted a shift that has occurred in the way these practicing teachers saw their roles since the beginning of the partnership relationship. She described the mentor teachers as initially hesitant to engage in professional sharing with other stakeholders, particularly college faculty, due to feelings of intimidation and the fear of criticism, but she remarked that she felt these fears had increasingly diminished.

I often think there's a shift in the way the teachers see themselves in their roles with the college professors. That takes longer but it's been a very, very long time since any of the teachers expressed anything to me that sounded like they were threatened by anybody's presence in their room. So just in terms of being more comfortable with multiple people in their rooms and in some cases, the entire intern group with professors, all in a room watching what somebody does, is no longer threatening. Those pieces weren't designed intentionally to influence the way teachers saw themselves but it has happened (Chris, partner leader interview, 2003-04).

The remarks of the mentor teachers in the focus group further confirmed that initial feelings of fear were surpassed by feelings of empowerment and confidence in their own practice and that of the interns. A shared sense of ownership emerged in the comments of these teachers when they spoke of the practice of the preservice interns.

You know, like for me, it's a good feeling for me because I had something to do with that. You know that's the way you feel, even if they go to other schools. You know and you hear about the accomplishments that they are making. I feel like I still had something to do with that too. Why even if I don't work with you all – I feel like I had something to do with the college's teachers. You know, just my input with the one or two students I have worked with – you know. So I really hope that the program can continue (Mary, stakeholder focus group, 2003-04).

Patterns of these attitudes about relationships and roles repeated in the newly collected focus group and archived survey data. In the focus group, one intern, Diane, talked about the roles of intern and mentor teacher becoming more collegial;

It did not feel more like, they were teachers and we're students. It was more like, we were working together. There was no longer a barrier between us of you are this way and I am this way – we were kind of both the same (stakeholder focus group, 2003-2004).

Multiple references (focus group, partner leader interviews, and survey data) indicated the majority of COPE interns who shared their feelings spoke positively about the close bonds they had established with their mentor teacher. Multiple sources indicated that the support and confidence followed them as they transitioned effectively into their student teaching placements and later into their initial teaching years.

Other role mergers appeared as a mentor teacher explained, “I now view myself as both a third grade teacher and a teacher educator” (mentor teacher surveys, 2001-02). In her interview, Chris recounted an experience with a mentor teacher that vividly illustrates the changes in roles fueled by the empowerment of the mentor teacher.

At the beginning of the program one of the second grade teachers, was so reluctant to even have an intern because she wasn't sure she could teach them anything. She was just a plain old second grade teacher. And that teacher has gone through a metamorphosis. She sees herself after having gone through the entire five years with interns and two student teachers, I think. She has gone through her own National Board Certification and has enrolled herself in a Master's program and describes herself as responsible for the success of some of these interns. So, she does see herself as a teacher educator (Chris, partner leader interview, 2003-2004).

Relationships and bonding appear as a strand throughout the PDS Impact Assessment model and in the CIPP model. From the initial organizational innovation and development of the program (Context phase) through the adaptations in roles, structures, and culture (Input phase) the relationships are the “glue” that hold the pieces together. The best practice and desired outcome components of the PDS Impact model examine in part the relationships of the partners in terms of their expectations for professional development, approaches to teaching and to teacher preparation (Teitel, 2000). These last two components correspond to the process and product sections of the CIPP model, examining the accountability of the relationship (Is it being done?) and the results (Stufflebeam, 2002).

Communication

The third theme that emerged from the data analysis was that of communication. This theme, defined as the ability of the partner stakeholders to share information and common understandings, appeared in a recurrent pattern throughout both the newly collected data and the archived pieces. Communication has been problematic for the partnership and has been one of the areas that received the harshest criticism in the end of the year surveys from interns and school staff. Such comments as “lack of communication” (intern survey, 2001-02), “more communication” (mentor survey, 2001-2002; teacher education faculty survey 2001-02), “a need for better communication between everyone involved” were common (intern survey, 2002-03). A review of the minutes of the COPE Advisory Committee showed that the partner leaders have responded to these criticisms in a variety of ways. The minutes from April 2000

discussed the development of a handbook, an orientation session, and a newsletter. In May 2000, minutes indicated discussion about the governance structure as a means of clarifying communication lines. Minutes from September 2003 showed a reaction to the recognition of communication as an issue of persistent concern. At that time, the Advisory Committee assigned communication as the focus of that year's fall retreat. Another attempt to improve communication appeared around the same time when the Advisory Committee decided that the COPE liaison would attend college departmental faculty meetings (minutes, September 2003). In her interview, Evelyn lamented the logistical problems of communication saying,

The biggest struggle we have had all the way through this is communication because nobody has any time to really share (information) like we need to and to make sure what is expected and exactly what to do (Evelyn, partner leader interview, 2003-04).

Data indicated that the quality of communication between interns and mentor teachers varied with some stakeholders relating a clear understanding and others indicating difficulty in communicating. In the stakeholder focus group, mentor teacher Mary shared that this particular year communication had been an issue between her intern and herself.

This year, hasn't been the best year for me, with my intern. And I felt like our communication hasn't been like it had been in the past with other interns. But she said something to me last week – the problem was that she never told me when things were coming up (Mary, stakeholder focus group, 2003-04).

The data supported the idea that, on a regular basis, COPE interns felt confusion and a lack of understanding about partnership activities and related classroom assignments. Survey responses included comments such as “more intern/school-based educator coordination and communication” (intern survey responses, 1998-99), “communication between the college and the school,” (intern survey responses 2001-02), and “better communication and scheduling” (intern survey responses 2002-03). However, mentor teacher responses varied on this topic with some relating that communication was improving, and others still viewing it as a problem. For example, “I always think communication is the key and understanding what is expected of you. I think this improves each year” (mentor survey, 2001-02) contrasted with, “more time to understand role and do not add demands and responsibilities; more communication” (mentor survey, 2001-02).

However, several elements of communication received positive recognition in the data. For example, interns were supported with verbal and written communication about their teaching and this specific support was met with positive comments in the data. COPE interns, mentor teachers, and teacher education faculty all found the three way conferences following observations of intern lessons and written evaluations to be helpful. Handbooks, newsletters, and other routine communications also facilitated smooth communication.

The PDS Impact Assessment model reflects a number of aspects of communication across all parts of the model (Teitel, 2000). The organizational innovation of a partnership itself requires initial and ongoing communication to establish

agreement on what the purposes and parts of the program will be, and how they will be implemented and assessed. Changes in existing roles and structures are created or new ones proposed and refined through a series of decision-making events. Once the structure is in place communication continues to be vital as expectations are shared. The partners must clearly communicate what they consider the desired outcomes to be for those involved in the work. Communication is expected between the stakeholders, but also reaches beyond the partnership outward to the larger community. Parents, community agencies, and faculty outside of the department of education become extended partners in the process of collaboration (Teitel, 2000). Effective communication continues to be a challenge and a vital link in the functioning of the Creative Options Partnership in Education as evidenced by the attention given to the topic by all of the stakeholders.

Benefits for the children

As evidenced in the data, stakeholders in the COPE partnership program believed that the program provided a number of benefits for the children of the partner school. These benefits were program activities or opportunities that extended, enhanced, and provided academic and social support to the learning experiences of the children enrolled at the partner school. These benefits for the children emerged as the fourth theme in the study.

It's all for the kids and I think the kids realize the respect we have for each other and it gives them a certain amount of flexibility. It's a good lesson for them (Helen, stakeholder focus group, 2003-04).

Special activities with an academic focus beyond the normal school routine that were sponsored by COPE were considered beneficial to the children by the partner leaders, mentor teachers, and interns. Such activities included a science demonstration day in which the interns hosted small groups of children in the gymnasium to experience a series of short experiments at different stations from which they rotated. Another activity mentioned as a benefit to children was the spring mathematics and fall reading tutorials that provided individualized assistance to students who had been identified by their teachers as needing attention.

Partner leader Evelyn remarked "of course our children have benefited because they have had extra help with tutors, we've had extra experiences from the science workshops and the demonstration lessons." Partner leader Ross mentioned the mathematics tutorial as well, saying "taking a look at the mathematics tutorial, I think that is where you've got the clearest cut evidence that we're making a significant difference" (Ross, partner leader interview, 2002-03). Mentor teachers and teacher education faculty members were quick to point out other places where funding from grants aided the children.

Survey data collected over the years from stakeholders mention materials purchased for the children to use. Mentor teachers mentioned books, software, and hardware that had been purchased for the school with grants acquired for those purposes.

I have enjoyed reading the books to my class that were purchased. I consistently use the digital camera to document activities and experiences. I use Millie's Mathhouse, math books and other technology such as CDs and more (mentor teacher surveys, 2002-03).

An additional benefit beyond that of the tangible materials purchased with partnership grant funds, were the intangible affective results of sustained positive attention given to the children through various aspects of the COPE program. Chris comments on the influences that the program has on the children noting both academic and social-emotional benefits.

They learn. And I think the program does help them meet that need by providing extra people in the classroom which lowers the class ratio of adult-to-child. And I think there's some evidence that this improves the likelihood that children will be successful. Although I think most of the research has been done with practicing teacher, so I don't really know if there's any evidence that just adding people makes a difference. I think the children's need for attention is met through the program. Our children in particular have so few grown-up people in their lives who give them any attention at all. Often I see the interns meeting that need for the children. Somebody to sit with them and eat lunch or somebody to read a story or in the case of the after school tutoring, sometimes I wonder if that's not really the need that we're meeting. I think it (the benefit) manifests itself in improved test scores, but I really wonder sometimes if we would see the same results if we had the interns just come and sit with the students one-on-one and have a conversation about anything (Chris, partner leader interview, 2003-04).

Connecting increased student performance on academic tests to the presence of the partnership program is problematic because there are many factors that impact student achievement and they are all in play at the same time. While students may be participating in tutoring programs through COPE, there are other innovations or changes in students' academic experiences that may impact their performance.

Funding and Resource Issues

From the data a fifth theme emerged regarding both the funding and the allocation and availability of resources, material and human, for the Creative Options Partnership in Education. At the beginning of the pilot year in 1998, the COPE program received a gift of initial start-up funding from the college partner. This gift enabled the partnership begin without concern for how to pay for the initial programming. The college continued to support the partnership for three more years through smaller annual gifts of money transferred from the discretionary funds of the Dean of the College to an account housed by the partner elementary school. This account did not operate as a budget, per se, with line items and a clear structure, but instead the account was viewed as a place from which basic operational materials could be purchased.

During the first and second year, COPE secured additional funding from two local philanthropic grants. These grants while restrictive in their application provided extensive financial support for targeted projects such as technology purchases and transportation for tutored students. These monies were not, however, able to support the partnership in terms of personnel. The minutes from the COPE Advisory Committee provided insights into the challenges of funding administrative positions for the program.

The next topic of discussion was the future of the Clinical Instructor position for COPE, a position that the liaison currently holds. A recent application has been submitted to a local foundation for grant money to fund a "lead teacher/clinical instructor" position. A copy of this grant has also been sent to another foundation as well. The partnership liaison has been serving in this role in addition to her regular teaching duties as a full-time teacher this year. The creation of this role was in response to the need to have contact people and coordinators at both the school and college sites. All parties agreed that the partnership in

its current form would have to be revised considerably if a full time position was not funded (Advisory Committee Minutes, January 2001).

However, the data indicate concerns and a lack of consensus regarding the flexibility and sustainability of funding sources. The partner leaders of COPE varied in their perceptions of the state of funding at the time they were interviewed. Partner leader Evelyn commented that “The school faculty has benefits because we have gotten lots of funding from grants...as I mentioned before we have gotten a lot of grant money from the program.” Partner leader Chris agreed that the grant money was beneficial.

We have “stuff”, I mean we have computers and software and we have classroom materials that ought to be on the asset list but they are not the primary asset of the partnership. We’re doing such a good job but we don’t have the resources that we need to do the job I know we could do... We don’t have a budget so the budget is zero. We have been very fortunate to get some grant money that is earmarked for some particular stuff and as nice as that is and as wonderful as it’s been. It doesn’t meet the need that I’m talking about. That’s different than a budget (Chris, partner leader interview, 2003-04).

The data indicated some contradictory perceptions about a sufficient and/or institutionalized funding system for the day-to-day operations of the COPE program. Partner leaders Evelyn and Chris indicated that they did not recognize a budget for COPE or a stable funding source.

There basically hasn’t been a budget, much of one, we got the grants and they’ve been wonderful. But, if we had a true budget, we would be paying the partnership liaison to do it full time. We’d pay somebody who is doing nothing else, no teaching here or at the college – just managing the program. Um, so you are talking about a lot of money there and I don’t think it is going to happen. But if we had a real budget, then we could do that – set up an area where we could have more demonstration lessons

easier, materials would be easier, more easily accessible - and we have done some of that. It is difficult...If we had a real budget and not just helter skelter grant money hither and yon but a real - here is the budget for COPE. And we have really never had that, but I think it would do a world of good because we could say we know we are going to have a program, we have this much money now what are we going to do with it. Rather than, wonder if we can get a grant? Can you use this grant money for this or does it have to be for that? (Evelyn, partner leader interview, 2003-2004).

Partner leader Chris echoed this sentiment when asked during the interview about the sufficiency of the budget for the partnership program.

We don't have a budget so the budget is zero. We have been very fortunate to get some grant money that is earmarked for some particular stuff and as nice as that is and as wonderful as it's been, it doesn't meet the need that I'm talking about. That's different than a budget (Chris, partner leader interview, 2003-2004).

However, partner leader Ross explained the situation another way.

Well, I guess it really depends on your perspective. To do this work the way it ought to be done there probably needs to be a full-time person. Efforts have gone to the school board to try and fund a full-time director and so I think when you look at it from the perspective that we need a full-time director then we don't have sufficient funds to run the program. I think when you look at it from the perspective of other programs then we have sufficient funds to operate (Ross, partner leader interview, 2003-04).

Evelyn concurred that in terms of total number of dollars, the partnership is more than sufficiently funded. However, the flexibility of the money appeared to be the issue.

It's been sufficient in some ways. This summer the partnership liaison said we had... and I can't think of the figure... but a large amount of money that we could use to order supplies because we order supplies that time of year and we couldn't spend it all. I mean we could have if we had wasted it but

we got what we wanted and needed and there was some left which is wonderful. But it was instructional materials - not to pay the partnership liaison - and it was not to make sure we had enough funds for tutoring. I don't know I guess we could have done that (the tutoring) but (if) the idea (was) that this money is a budget that would pay for COPE to be run - that wasn't it (Evelyn, partner leader interview, 2003-2004).

The efforts to gain support through the school system that were mentioned by Ross appeared in Evelyn's interview. As she spoke about her views on the resources and financial support available to the partnership, Evelyn recounted earlier struggles and described the initial attempts of the partnership visionaries to get support from the local school board.

I think another obstacle has been the lack of support from our own school system. Um, at first when the college elementary coordinator talked to me years ago about this, our central office did nothing - simply said no. They were afraid it would cost them something. They were afraid they would slight another college in the community. "No, we just better not do that." And then once the college education chairperson got involved, by then we had different superintendent and it was fine as long it was not any trouble for us (the school system). And in fact, we had to put in a letter that it was not going to cost the system anything (Evelyn, partner leader interview, 2003-2004).

Based on the data, other stakeholders (interns and mentor teachers) seemed unaware of financial constraints. The data reveal that from their perspective, COPE provided ample support, particularly in terms of classroom materials and supplies.

I have enjoyed reading the books to my class that were purchased; I constantly use the digital camera to document activities and experiences; Very valuable classroom materials, math books and technology - CDs, like Millie's Mathhouse (mentor teacher surveys, 2001-02).

The data show that the acquisition of additional human resources was the greatest challenge perceived by the partner leaders.

The need for a director is still a concern but in today's budgetary climate and the perception of teacher education, quite frankly I don't see it coming (Ross, partner leader interview, 2003-04).

Chris supported this assertion and indicated that despite the challenges she believed that the program was operating fairly well.

Well, we're...it's a hard question to answer. I think we, actually, given our limited resources, given our size, given that we don't have a university liaison that just is a liaison and doesn't also have four other classes she's teaching and no credit reduction or anything else for doing it, that our director on site is also teaching children all day long, that we have no operating budget, the kinds of program...the kinds of pieces that we've put in our program, based on what I've heard from other partnerships...We're doing a pretty good job (Chris, partner leader interview, 2003-2004).

She concludes her comments about this issue by saying that she realizes the barriers to securing a regular funding source.

And it seems just really sad to me and really frustrating, to know what a good job we're doing preparing teachers and what a difference we're making in the lives of children and practicing teachers but we never found a way to convince the people who hold the purse strings and write the budgets to make us a ...to legitimize us I guess is the way I want to say it. It's like we're a special project. It's not like we're a critical piece of what they are about and I know that we are (Chris, partner leader interview, 2003-04).

An important resource for the school partner appeared to be the recruitment and retention of new faculty from the cohorts of COPE interns and student teachers. Evelyn shared the following story to explain the value she perceived of this resource.

I have gotten a lot of good teachers from the program so that certainly is the greatest thing that has helped. I was taking someone around the other day for a tour of the school and I just thinking to myself, there is a COPE person who is now a teacher. You could go through and point them out, and they have been great teachers. You know who they are, none of them have been “Oh I shouldn’t have hired them” kind of people (Evelyn, partner leader interview, 2003-04).

Mentor teacher Mary in the stakeholder focus group discussed the positive feelings she had about having former interns and student teachers as colleagues.

I’ve said in the past, I like even having teachers that we have trained to work at the partner elementary school, you know. I think that is an impact (Mary, stakeholder focus group, 2003-04).

Other mentors over the years have also indicated that they felt that one of the benefits of the partnership was the human resources it provided in terms of new licensed teachers who already knew the school’s culture. The following comments in the survey data from mentor teachers support this idea of human resources as a potential benefit, as well as the benefit of material support.

Increased funding available through grants, extra remedial help, opportunity to know, train and hire excellent new teachers; Since I’ve had little opportunity to work with the program, I feel that materials purchased by COPE for the partner school’s use are those we might not otherwise have (mentor teacher survey, 2001-02).

Summary Vignette

The following vignette of a mentor teacher represents an integrated summary of the themes from the data. She reflects on the journey of her own teacher preparation and her new role of preparing teachers.

We wrote out all those lovely goals and I decided I would like to be a part of them because of the baggage I carry. I didn't go to school until I was 35. I didn't graduate until I was 38. So I wasn't...I hadn't been that far removed from teacher education at a different college and my goal was, "Gosh, I have to make it better than what I had" because what I had was terrible where the college part was concerned. They made us meet at a school where I'd never been, teach a lesson when I'd never seen the children, I didn't get to talk to the teacher. I came in, and did la-di-da-di-da and left, and then never saw them again. That's the most impersonal experience in the world. I figured it's got to be better than that. And that was my goal and I feel like in the long run we have not only met a lot of the goals we set but we've had benefits other than that. And I always go back to some of the situations that I've had and of course one of them being the intern I had last time that became my student teacher and then became my coworker. You just don't get any better than that. All along the way, I kept thinking to myself, "Boy, am I lucky to be a part of this". I wish I could take credit for all the things that have happened but I think that's probably one of the best things about this experience. It's not just your end or my end or your end or your end. We have an opportunity to make things real to you but not only that, we have an opportunity to make you love teaching. That's what I think our job is, to get you from "Yeah, I think I want to be a teacher, but gosh I don't think I can do all those things" to "Oh my gosh, I can do just about everything". There is no other way than what I think is the natural transition. You come in, you meet the students, you watch what we do. You feel comfortable in the classroom. You go on. You take a little one-on-one with a child, then next thing you know, you're working in a small group. Then, we throw you right up there in front of the class, but we're with you all along, not just us but the teachers at the college and there's always someone there for you and that just spells support to me every step along the way (stakeholder focus group, 2003-04).

Correlation of Themes to Evaluation Models

The PDS Impact Assessment model and the CIPP program evaluation model address the issues of funding and resources throughout each part of the model. The context or initial program development reflect a resource structure and then adaptations occur in roles, structures and cultures as the program matures (input phase). The process phase involves how the resources are utilized to support the functions and activities of the program and the product phase reflects how the outcomes of the program might serve as a later resource.

Figure 3 illustrates the connection between the five emergent themes from the data sources and the part of Stufflebeam's CIPP model and Teitel's PDS Impact Assessment Model.

Figure 3 Alignment of the Themes with the CIPP and PDS Impact Models		
Stufflebeam's CIPP Evaluation Model	Teitel's PDS Impact Assessment Model	Five Themes
CONTEXT Assessment (What is being done and what needs to be done?)	<i>Assessment of Organizational Innovation; Partnership Development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Funding and Resources
INPUT Assessment (How is it done and how should it be done?)	<i>Assessment of Adaptations in Roles, Structures, and Culture</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Funding and Resources
PROCESS Assessment (Is it being done?)	<i>Assessment of Best Practice in Teaching Learning and Leadership</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connections to enhanced practice • Communication • Funding and Resources • Sense of Support and Stability
PRODUCT Assessment (Did it succeed?)	<i>Assessment of Desired Outcomes In Improved Learning For Students Teachers and other School Personnel</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits to the Children • Communication • Funding and Resources

Summary

The four themes that emerged from the data apply to the different stakeholder groups in unique and common ways. For example, connections that enhanced the practice of preservice interns included experiences that when applied to practicing mentor

teachers or teacher education faculty would not be considered an enhancement. However, there were shared experiences that resulted in growth for all groups, such as the opportunity to participate in conversations about teaching and learning, or to learn new teaching applications together such as the integration of digital cameras into instructional practice.

All of the emergent themes connected to the adaptations that have occurred in the roles, structures, and culture of the stakeholder groups and institutional bodies related to each. For example, the roles of mentor teacher and COPE liaison have provided additional opportunities for communication, dialogue, and new types of relationships.

The emergent themes also included contrasting perspectives on the same concept, such as the difference in viewpoints that appeared in the data pertaining to the existence of a budget, the differences that appeared in how communication was perceived by various stakeholders, and differences in the assessment of desired outcomes.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings presented in the analysis of the data gathered from partnership leaders, other stakeholder representatives, and from COPE program records. The discussion includes how the findings inform the six research questions that guided this study. The chapter explores implications of the findings for professional development school (PDS) partnerships and provides recommendations based on this study for future research.

The five themes that emerged through the examination of the data in this study reflect many of the same considerations discussed in other PDS impact research literature. Evaluation research literature on the topic of professional development schools is a relatively new phenomenon. This study's application of both general and PDS specific evaluation research models, Stufflebeam's CIPP model and Teitel's PDS Impact Assessment model, within a study of a partnership program is unique. Thus, the findings from this research study inform the body of literature known as PDS impact literature.

Examining a program about which I had some prior knowledge and experience increased the potential for bias and misinterpretation. To enhance the level of trustworthiness in the data collection, I followed the established guidelines of the university's Institutional Research Board and used appropriate protocols and

confidentiality measures. Data were collected from multiple and diverse sources to provide triangulation. Research participants clarified and commented on the transcribed interviews to verify the accuracy of the reported data. During analysis, only when data patterns appeared across diverse sources (e.g., interview transcripts, focus group transcripts, archived summary data from surveys and focus groups), were the passages assigned to categories. In order to monitor for bias and to try diligently to maintain objectivity, I frequently questioned my interpretations, and focused on allowing the data patterns to emerge.

Research Questions

The following six questions guided this research study:

1. In what ways, if any, has the partnership program implemented changes intended to improve the quality of teacher preparation?
2. In what ways, if any, has the partnership program implemented changes intended to influence the professional roles of the educators involved?
3. In what ways, if any, has the partnership program implemented changes to assist educators in identifying connections between classroom practice and educational theory?
4. In what ways, if any, has the partnership implemented changes intended to produce measurable improvements in classroom learning?
5. In what ways, if any, has the partnership implemented changes intended to facilitate the practice of inquiry?
6. What have been the results of these implemented changes?

The data revealed that there were changes within the Creative Options Partnership in Education designed to improve the quality of teacher preparation (research question one). In fact, the first theme in the data, connections that enhance practice, implies by its title the idea of improvement. Data connected to this theme provided many examples of program activities which the stakeholders (mentor teachers, interns, and teacher education faculty) believed had improved the quality of the teacher education program linked to the partnership. The program offered a carefully structured, sequenced, closely supervised and supported practicum experience for preservice interns.

Multiple comments across cohorts by COPE interns indicated that the interns felt more confident, competent, and comfortable in discussing their teaching and in responding to critiques of their practice. These findings support conclusions in earlier studies that also reported that PDS prepared teachers felt increased confidence and better prepared to teach, particularly in diverse settings (Tusin, 1995; Book, 1996; Arends & Winitzky, 1996). Also the school principal, interns, their mentors, and the college education faculty felt that teachers prepared through the partnership understand school life better and that they transition more easily into the school culture. These voices support the findings of the studies recounted by Trachtman (1996), Hayes and Wetherill (1996), the Houston Consortium for Professional Development and Technology Evaluation Study (1997) and others (Loving et al., 1997; Coyle et al., 2002).

Data describing the retention of interns in the profession of teaching also echo the findings on retention mentioned in the PDS literature (Hayes & Wetherill, 1999). Of the five cohorts of interns who have finished their licensure requirements, 95% are currently

teaching and 90% are currently serving schools in the state of North Carolina. At the end of their second year of teaching, 90% of the former COPE interns from the first cohort were still teaching (all of those in North Carolina), compared to 72.1% of their peers who started in North Carolina with the same level of experience at the same time (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2003). After their first year, 100% of the second cohort were teaching (89% of those in North Carolina), compared to 69.6% of their peers of similar time experience teaching in North Carolina (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2003). The COPE program components provided extended opportunities for practicing teachers and classrooms of children to experience interactions with others in the broader educational community whose insights and expertise provided support for the shared goals of the partners.

The data also revealed that there were changes incorporated into the COPE program that, intentionally or unintentionally, influenced the professional roles of the educators involved (research question two). The comments of COPE mentor teachers both in focus groups and surveys reflected feelings of openness toward experiencing new and varied approaches to teaching. These comments support the research findings found in the literature that point to an increased willingness among teachers who participate in PDS work to take risks and to try new and varied approaches (Zeichner, 1992; Miller & O'Shea, 1994; Crow et al., 1996; Kosleski, 1999).

In order to implement the planned program activities effectively, it became necessary to amend the traditional definitions that had informed the roles and structures of teacher preparation in the past. The crossing of institutional boundaries and blurring of

distinctions were mentioned by Teitel (2000) as an expected part of PDS implementation. This boundary crossing was pictured in this research study through evidence of the creation of new roles such as a “clinical adjunct” or “partnership director” position for the COPE program. Less formal, but no less powerful, have been the shifts that have occurred in the thinking of the stakeholders regarding their roles in the program. The data provided examples of teachers of children viewing themselves as teachers of teachers and teacher educators viewing themselves as teachers of children. Strands within a number of themes (e.g., connections that enhance practice, relationships and bonding, and funding and resource issues) revealed evidence of an emergence of a broader collegial community where there was unity of purpose and collaborative ideals. These findings about increased collegiality and emergent leadership support those reported in earlier studies (Loving et al., 1997; Gill and Hove, 2000). It is interesting to note, however, that the data reflected an understanding by the stakeholder groups that the learning of college faculty and their growth were influenced to a lesser degree than was the learning of the other stakeholder groups. This finding is similar to that reported in the PDS study by Kosleski (1999).

Support existed for the idea that changes were implemented in the COPE program for the purpose of assisting educators in identifying connections between classroom practice and educational theory (research question 3). In the data, the stakeholder groups provided multiple examples of theory-to-practice connections that clustered primarily around the first theme of “connections that enhance practice.” Early direct teaching experiences, extended support, and dialogue opportunities were the primary ways that theory-to-practice connections were nurtured.

Positive influences on achievement connected to PDS program components is emerging in the literature (Wiseman & Crooner, 1996; Abdal-Haqq, 1998; Houston et al., 1999; Gill & Hove, 2000), and this study produced findings that supported the idea that the COPE partnership incorporated changes intended to produce measurable improvements in classroom learning (research question 4). Program components such as tutoring in the areas of reading and mathematics supported this goal for P-5 students and teacher candidates, both of whom learned and practiced content and skills that were later applied in situations that measured their performance (e.g., state End-of-Grade tests for children and required PRAXIS assessments for interns and student teachers).

Due to the complexity of factors which influence children's and interns' learning, it was not possible to associate the COPE mathematics tutoring program in a causal relationship to the partner school children's or interns' performance on standardized tests. However, there were data in the COPE Advisory Committee minutes and partnership archives to indicate that the COPE tutoring program supported positive performance in the children in the area of mathematics. The data reported through the partnership records indicate that during the last three years, 96.5% of all children tutored in mathematics through the partnership program showed an increase in performance on the North Carolina End-of-Grade mathematics test for their grade. Of those showing an increase, 44.7% met or exceeded a level of growth rated "exemplary" by the state, and 47% met or exceeded an "expected" level of growth. No data were available on the performance of children in the reading tutorial program, and the aggregated data available on COPE intern's PRAXIS performance over the last five years showed no significant patterns.

Indications that program changes facilitated the practice of inquiry (research question 5) were less evident, which appears to be congruent with the experiences of other PDS programs described in the literature (Kosleski, 1999; Gill & Hove, 2000). Few specific program components were designed to address this purpose directly although some components appeared to do so informally such as the reflective practices of the stakeholder groups that appeared around the theme of connections that enhance practice as well as the teacher empowerment that fuels inquiry that appeared around the theme of relationships and bonding. While there is no evidence to support a causal relationship between participation in the partnership and professional advancement on the part of the partnership stakeholders, interview transcripts and partnership records indicate that over the last five years, two of the partner leaders have completed advanced degrees, and four mentor teachers have achieved National Board Certification. In addition, three mentor teachers began graduate studies, two on the Master's level and one on the Doctoral level, and two of the interns from the first cohort began graduate studies on the Master's level. While there appears to be positive movement in the area of professional development among stakeholders, the implications of this data are less clear as there were no comparative data available.

Formative and summative program evaluation itself can be viewed as a practice of inquiry, and with that consideration the COPE program is actively engaging in the practice of institutional inquiry. The partnership plans to continue conducting annual surveys and focus groups and then reviewing the data for ongoing program assessment purposes and to inform program decision-making.

Results of the implemented changes (research question 6) appeared across the five themes and were identifiable within each of the data sources as evidenced in chapter four. Experiences of the stakeholders, both routine and extraordinary, provided information that informed the categories that clustered around each theme. Those experiences described within the findings (e.g, opportunities for reflection, professional development, etc.) indicated that the stakeholder groups perceived the results of the program efforts to be positive, and they plan to continue their efforts.

Implications for PDS Partnerships

The primary implication of this research study for PDS partnerships is the continued application of the PDS Impact Assessment model (Teitel, 2000) in explicating and evaluating the work of school-university partnership programs. In applying this assessment model to the Creative Options Partnership in Education, each of the goals of PDS work, identified by Teitel and the PDS Standards Project (Teitel, 1998a), can be examined and understood more clearly.

The findings of this research study indicate that the stakeholders in the COPE program believed the actions of the program over the last five years have supported the goal of the improvement of student learning. These beliefs gather further support from descriptive data, such as the positive trends in the performance of the children tutored in mathematics.

This study also found that many COPE stakeholders believed the partnership contributed positively to the quality of teacher education, another goal of PDS work. Descriptive data do not show significant changes in teacher candidate performance on

standardized assessments, but there are descriptive data to support a high retention rate for COPE prepared teachers.

The findings in this study around the goal of enhanced professional development are weaker than for the first two mentioned. While there are descriptive data to indicate that some COPE stakeholders have advanced professionally during and since their involvement in the partnership, it is unclear what role, if any, their partnership experiences played in this development. Could it be that the teachers, administrators, and faculty who become engaged in PDS work are those educators who are more likely to engage in professional development? Or, do the partnership experiences of those educators influence their decisions to engage in professional development? Further investigation is needed to help illuminate the possible connections within this relationship.

The goal of engaging partnership participants in research and inquiry into practice was even more weakly supported. This research study found these functions primarily existed in the annual program assessments and informally through the stakeholders' recollection of their individual reflective practice. Less support existed for this goal than for the areas. For example, the focus of the tutoring program was student learning and the mentor-intern component focused on teacher preparation and professional development of teachers. The problematic nature of this goal may lie in the cultural differences found between the university and public school partners.

These cultural differences, emergent at several points during this study, reveal differences of interpretation among the partners based on the patterns within the culture

of their institution. For example, the COPE leaders appear to interpret the financial structures of the partnership differently as evidenced by their varying interpretations of the partnership's budgetary status. Each partner based their expectations and assumptions on their prior experiences within their institution. The same may be true for their interpretations about the nature of research and inquiry. Each partner's previous experiences with these terms may influence their ability to communicate effectively in attending to this goal.

In order to survive, and hopefully to thrive, PDS partnerships must be able to explain their work clearly and justify its impact on P-12 students and on professional educators in light of the increased scrutiny of the performances of both groups. The qualities of the PDS Impact Assessment model reflect the recently adopted NCATE PDS standards that emphasize the importance of rigor in evaluating quality preparation and continuous professional renewal to teachers. The qualitative methods utilized in this case study allow readers to examine a vivid picture of frustrations, hopes, desires and results of those working in PDS relationships. Such rich contextual evaluations may be more meaningful for those engaged in refining the practices and resolving the issues that accompany innovative program operations.

Recommendations for Further Research

The voices in this study pose questions and topics for further research. Such issues include the complex nature of communication among stakeholders and the differences in their institutional cultures that seem to loom as such a barrier to effectiveness for so many partnership programs. These issues are areas

for continued inquiry and study that play a direct role in facilitating PDS work. Another area of potential research revealed through this study is that of the mentor-intern relationship and the importance and implications of this relationship for retention and continued development of effective teachers. Recent public scrutiny of the working conditions of teachers and concerns aired in the public and legislative arenas about teacher quality make the relevance of this topic paramount.

These arenas await harvest news from the teacher gardens of professional development schools around the globe. Future research on the impacts of PDS partnerships will contribute to the “value added” position to convince policymakers to invest in the fertilizer for these partnerships. The fruits of the harvest are children with higher achievement, quality teachers who survive, thrive, and nurture new seedlings, and enhanced knowledge of teaching and learning.

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Appendix A

GOALS OF THE COPE PARTNERSHIP

(adopted May 21, 1998)

Goal 1 – To improve the quality of a teacher preparation program through rigorous entry and program standards and a relevant array of “real world” application experiences.

Goal 2 – To create more powerful and effective models to strengthen the profession of teaching, including school leadership, from the initial stages of preparation through the socialization, induction, and continuous renewal of educators.

Goal 3 – To close the gap between educational theory and the wisdom of practice.

Goal 4 – To redefine the professional roles of school-based and college-based educators consistent with the needs and demands of the 21st century.

Goal 5 – To improve an elementary school through the development of better prepared educators who contribute to a school culture focused on learning outcomes.

Goal 6 – To produce measurable improvements in classroom learning for all students at all levels through collaboration, which combines, focuses, and uses the collective talents, knowledge, energies, and resources of the partners.

Appendix B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In what ways, if any, do you think the COPE program serves the needs of its various stakeholders (interns, school-based faculty, college-based faculty, school children)?
(context)
2. When a need is identified, what strategies does the program have to respond to it?
(input)
3. What assets, if any, do you think the program has? What problems, if any, do you think the COPE program has?
(context)
4. How would you describe the sufficiency of the program's budget to fund the work?
(input)
5. In terms of its operations and activities, how does COPE compare with other school-university partnerships?
(input)
6. What program activities, if any, have been designed to influence the quality of teacher preparation? In terms of outcomes, how, if at all, does this program improve the quality of teacher preparation?
(process and product)
7. What program activities, if any, have been designed to influence the professional roles of the educators involved? In terms of outcomes, how, if at all, does the program influence the professional roles of educators?
(process and product)
8. What program activities, if any, have been designed to assist educators in identifying connections between classroom practice and educational theory? In terms of outcomes, how, if at all, does the program demonstrate that it helps educators identify theory-practice connections?
(process and product)
9. What program activities, if any, have been designed to address measurable improvement in classroom learning? In terms of outcomes, how, if at all, does the program produce measurable improvements in classroom learning?
(process and product)
10. Is there anything else you would like to say about the COPE program?

Appendix C

FOCUS GROUP QUESTION

What do you think have been the impacts, if any, of the partnership program?